We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. 1. Cor. 4. 5.

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THE WORKS

Of the LEARNED and PIOUS

AUTHOR

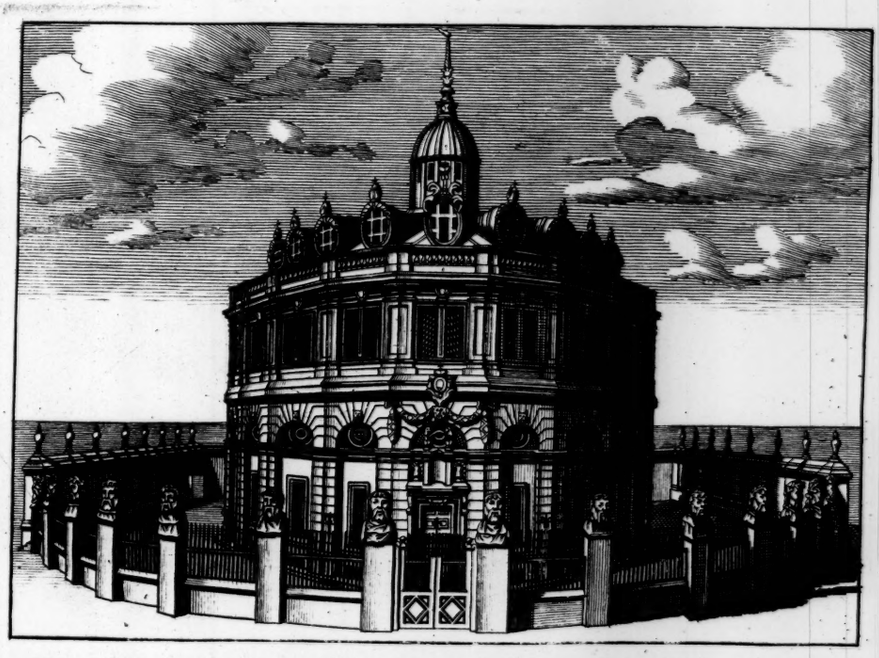
OF

The Whole Duty of Man.

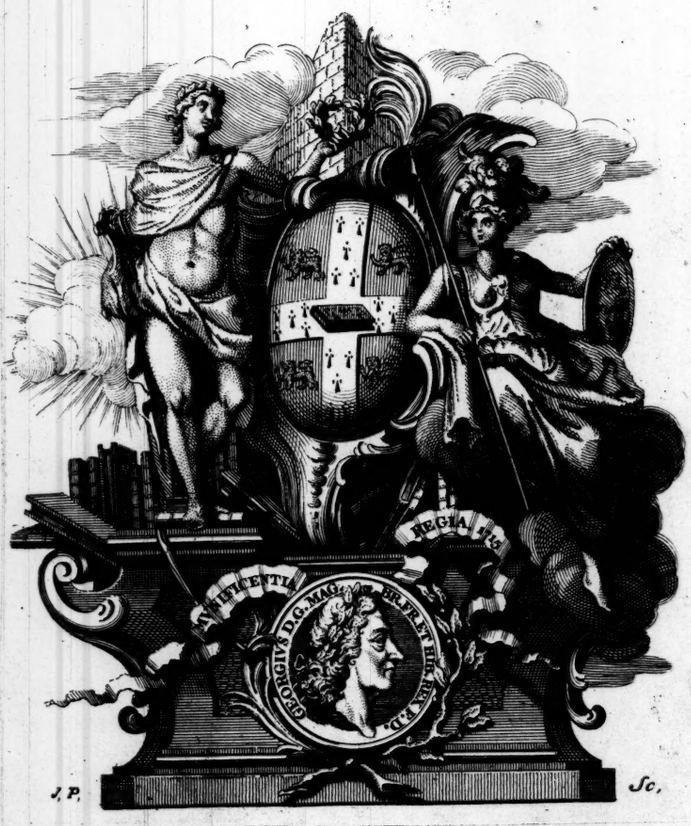
Pſal. 37. 37.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the end of that Man is peace.



Printed at the THEATER in *Oxford*, and in *London*, by *Roger Norton*, for *George Pawlett*, at the ſign of the Bible in *Chancery Lane*.
Anno DOMINI M. DC. LXXXIV.



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THE PREFACE.

OUr excellent Author having wrote the Tracts which make up these Volumes, at several times, as the exigence of the Church, and the benefit of Souls directed their composure; did likewise publish them apart, in the same order as they were made: which procedure had this incidental advantage, that the Reader was not at any time affrighted, by too great a task at once impos'd upon him; and could carry about in all removes those instructions, with which it was his interest to be still conversant.

But on the other part there are inconveniences which accompany the edition of Manuals and little Tracts, which had an influence on these before us; that they are liable to be debas'd by stoln impressions, to be thought slightly of as pamphlets, to be scatter'd and lost by reason of their smallness, and to be perfunctorily read, being portable from place to place, and thereby expos'd to be laid down, with the same ease as they were taken up. To obviate these and the like accidents, this larger edition has bin undertaken, that these most useful writings which have in pieces suffer'd by surreptitious impressions, may be secur'd from the attemts of needy pilferers, and the night-work of underground presses; and being joind together escape the danger of dispersion or loss, or negligent treatment: remaining in the Closets of the devout, and Libraries of the Learn'd, what Thucydides *call'd his Work, the* possession *not only of present, but* of future times; *and there give entertainment to the fixt and sedentary recollections of diligent Readers, being lookt*

into

into with ſtudy and concern proportionable to the dignity of the ſubjects treated of, and the judicious managery of them; and thereby, beyond that pitifull immortality which Heathen writers deſignd unto their labors and themſelves; procure to others the actual enjoyment of perpetual Bleſſedneſs, and in the nobleſt and moſt beneficiall way, appear to be a poſſeſsion to eternity.

It may not be amiſs in this place to give the Reader notice of an artifice that has bin us'd by ſeveral Writers, or Bookſellers, or both of them, to make their wares more paſſable, by a pretence to our Author. One entitles his Book The Duty of Man, *another,* The Whole Duty of Man laid down in expreſs words of Scripture; *another,* The Whole Duty of Man, part II: *and ſeveral ſubſequent books have bin inſcrib'd, as wrote by the Authors of ſome of theſe. Now in all theſe caſes if an enquiry happen to be made, there is a ready ſubterfuge. The firſt ſaies the book which he refers to is the* Duty of Man, *not* the Whole Duty; *the ſecond declares that he means the* whole Duty of man laid down in expreſs words of Scripture; *and therefore when he averrs that ſuch or ſuch a book was written by the Author of* The whole Duty of Man, *there is an* &c. *added to ſhew that the title is imperfectly quoted. The third has to ſay for himſelf, that he has in plain termes told the world that* The whole Duty of Man, part II. *was not writ by the ſame hand that wrote the original Book, and if Readers will be negligent and not obſerve, he cannot help it. So many little arts there have bin to make an advantage, and impoſe upon men, without telling a broad downright untruth. Beyond all theſe there is now lately come abroad a weak, rambling, incoherent Tract entitled,* The Vanity of the Creature, by the Author of the whole Duty of Man, *and leaſt this ſhould not be credited, the Reader is refer'd to a farther account in a letter prefixt to the book, which ſaies that the* little Tract, call'd the Vanity of the Creature, was written by the firſt Author of the whole duty of man: *but indeed tis a ſtrange vanity of this Creature to hope to be believ'd in ſo extravagant an aſſeveration, which almoſt every period of that book confutes. To avoid like attemts and impoſtures for the future, it is here ſolemnly declard; that theſe Tracts which we here exhibit, are the genuine and the only Writings of our Author.*

Indeed had Almighty God lent longer life to this eminent Perſon, we might have receiv'd many and ample benefits by it; and particularly a juſt treatiſe, which was deſign'd and promis'd, of the Government of the Thought: *an argument which none had more deeply conſider'd in its utmoſt extent, or was better pre-*

pard

par'd fully to comprehend or give direction in; for as 'tis the prerogative of Omniſcience to know the thoughts of others; ſo it requires a great meaſure of divine aſſiſtance and purity of heart to underſtand ones own. And certainly had this work bin finiſht, 'twould have equal'd, if not excell'd, whatever that inimitable hand had formerly wrote: But the divine wiſdom judg'd it fit, to deny the benefit of this inſtitution to our profligate age, which is ſo little concern'd to regulate the ſallies of thought, that it ſtops at no extravagance of words or villany of actions; and is ſo far from being reduc'd by gentle methods of perſuaſion, as not to be reſtraind by the ſeverity of laws, or terrors of executions.

Tis not to be denied that in the diſputing parts of religion men of impious lives, may wrangle with much accuracy; and in the declamatory way harangue it with fluency and vehemence: but in the vital parts of piety the deſcription of the new creature, its being enlightned, *and* taſting the good VVord of God and Powers of the world to come; *this* ſecret of the Lord is only with them that fear him: a ſtranger doth not meddle with this joy, the carnall cannot underſtand it.

Therefore it may juſtly be eſteem'd as a particular recommendation of what is here deliver'd, that it was practice, before it was ſpeculation, and that we literally have the authors works. The whole Duty of Man *had its firſt, and moſt correct edition in life and practice; and the* Tongue was Govern'd, *and* Contentment *gaind before they were deſcrib'd; nor was there any thing in this whole Volume wrote by gueſs and at adventure, but from long experience, and evidence of fact.*

Many, I doubt not, will now expect an account of the Perſon and condition of the Author; but beſides that it is an ill-manner'd thing, to pry into what is ſtudiouſly concel'd; the gratifying this curioſity, would be an injury to the deſign of theſe Writings, by robbing them of one very efficacious motive of conviction. As the caſe now ſtands, all men muſt ſee and allow, that neither faction, nor intereſt, nor pride, nor covetouſneſs; nor other temporal advantage was ſought for by the time and pains emploid in theſe Diſcourſes; and that the ſetting forth the glory of God, and ſerving the intereſts of Piety in gaining ſouls, were entirely the inducements: and therefore in all reaſon to be hearkned to and complied with, by all ſuch as have a conſideration of Duty and value for Eternity. It was an old and frequent objection againſt the Heathen writers of Morality, that to thoſe very Diſcourſes which they wrote of the contemt of Glory, they prefixt their names; and by their titles confuted their whole Books.

Twill

Twill surely be of moment to evacuate this objection, since it would lie more strongly against a Christian Moralist, whose obligations to humility are greater then any heathens were; and who is strictly bound to avoid *not only the approches to, but* all appearances of evill.

If the Reader shall please instead of useless enquiries, to bring the same devotion and sincerity to the perusal of these discourses, as was emploid in the writing of them; if he print in his mind, and transcribe into his practice what he reads, his pains will be answerd by suitable advantage: and this kind of edition will be such, as will not be injurious to the Author or his book by debasing of it; nor to the Publishers propriety, in multiplying copies, and by this honest way, stealing an Impression.

The pious Votary will by this method, more intimately acquaint himself with the Writer of these Tracts, then he could do by any the most punctual account of his Name and Family and Person, that a Herald, Historian or Painter could contrive. Let him be wise and humble, temperate, chast, patient, charitable, and devout: live a whole age of great austerities, and maintain an undisturbd serenity in the midst of them: and then he will himself become, a lively picture of our Author.

Since the time of the writing, and also printing the foregoing Preface, there is publish'd a small Tract entitled, The art of Patience under all afflictions, an Appendix to the Art of Contentment, by the Author of the whole duty of Man &c. *which being a new instance of disingenious dealing with the memory of our Author, and enterprizing upon the belief of unwary Readers, it seem'd convenient to give this notice of it.*

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN,

LAID DOWN

In a plain and Familiar Way

FOR THE

USE of ALL,

But especially the

MEANEST READER.

Divided into Seventeen Chapters:

One whereof being read every Lords Day, the Whole may be read over Thrice in the Year.

Necessary for all Families.

WITH

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS

For several OCCASIONS.

LONDON,

Printed by *Roger Norton*, for *George Pawlet*, at the Sign of the Bible in *Chancery-Lane*, near *Fleetstreet*, 1684.

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A

PREFACE

To the ensuing

TREATISE,

SHEWING

The Necessity of Caring for the Soul.

Sect. 1. THE only intent of this ensuing Treatise, is to be a short and Plain Direction to the very meanest Readers, to behave themselves so in this world, that they may be happy for ever in the next. But because 'tis in vain to tell men their Duty, till they be perswaded of the necessity of performing it, I shall, before I proceed to the Particulars required of every Christian, endeavour to win them to the Practice of one general Duty preparatory to all the rest; and that is the Consideration and CARE of their own SOULS, without which they will never think themselves much concern'd in the other.

2. MAN we know, is made up of two parts, a BODY and a SOUL: The Body only the husk or shell of the Soul, a lump of flesh, subject to many Diseases and pains while it lives, and at last to Death it self; and then 'tis so far from being valued, that 'tis not to be endured above ground, but laid to rot in the Earth. Yet to this viler part of us we perform a great deal of Care; all the labour and toil we are at, is to maintain that. But the more precious part, the Soul, is little thought of, no care taken how it fares, but as if it were a thing that nothing concern'd us, is left quite neglected, never consider'd by us.

3. This Carelesness of the Soul is the root of all the sin we commit, and therefore whosoever intends to set upon a Christian course, must in the first place amend that. To the doing whereof, there needs no deep learning, or extraordinary parts; the simplest man living (that is not a natural fool) hath understanding enough for it, if he will but act in this by the same rules of common Reason, whereby he proceeds in his worldly business. I will therefore now briefly set down some of those Motives, which use to stir up our care of any outward thing, and then apply them to the Soul.

4. There be FOUR things especially, which use to awake our care; the first is the Worth of the thing, the second the Usefulness of it to us, when we cannot part with it without great damage and mischief, the Third the great Danger of it, and the Fourth the Likelihood that our care will not be in vain, but that it will preserve the thing cared for.

5. For the First, we know our care of any worldly thing is answerable to the Worth of it; what is of greatest Price, we are most watchful to preserve, and most fearful to lose; no man locks up dung in his chest, but his money, or what he counts precious, he doth. Now in this respect the Soul deserves more care, than all the things in the world besides, for 'tis infinitely more worth; first, in that it is made after the Image of God, it was God that breathed into man this breath of life, Gen. 2. 7. Now God being

The worth of the Soul.

of the greateſt Excellency and worth, the more any thing is like him, the more it is to be valued. But 'tis ſure that no Creature upon the earth is at all like God, *but the Soul of man, and therefore nothing ought to have ſo much of our care.* Secondly, *the* Soul *never* Dies. *We uſe to prize things according to their* Durableneſs: *What is moſt Laſting is moſt Worth. Now the Soul is a thing that will laſt for ever: When Wealth, Beauty, Strength, nay, our very Bodies themſelves fade away, the Soul ſtill continues. Therefore in that reſpect alſo, the Soul is of the greateſt worth; and then what ſtrange madneſs is it for us to neglect them as we do? We can ſpend Days, and Weeks, and Months, and Years, nay, our whole Lives in hunting after a little wealth of this world, which is of no durance or continuance, and in the mean time let this great durable treaſure, our* Souls, *be ſtollen from us by the* Devil.

The miſery of loſing the Soul.

6. *A ſecond* Motive *to our care of any thing, is the* USEFULNES *of it to us, or the great* Miſchief *we ſhall have by the* loſs *of it. Common reaſon teaches us this in all things of this life. If our Hairs fall, we do not much regard, becauſe we can be well enough without them: But if we are in danger to loſe our Eyes or Limbs, we think all the care we can take little enough to prevent it, becauſe we know it will be a great miſery. But certainly there is no Miſery to be compared to that miſery that follows the Loſs of the Soul. 'Tis true, we cannot Loſe our Souls, in one ſence, that is, ſo loſe them, that they ſhall ceaſe to Be; but we may loſe them in another, that we ſhould wiſh to loſe them even in that; That is, we may loſe that happy eſtate, to which they were created, and plunge them into the extreameſt miſery. In a word, we may loſe them in* Hell, *whence there is no fetching them back, and ſo they are loſt for ever. Nay, in this conſideration our very* bodies *are concerned, thoſe Darlings of ours, for which all our care is laid out: For they muſt certainly after Death be Raiſed again, and be joyned again to the* Soul, *and take part with it in whatever ſtate; if then our care for the* body *take up all our Time and Thoughts, and leave us none to beſtow on the poor* Soul, *it is ſure the* Soul *will for want of that care be made for ever Miſerable. But it is as ſure, that that very* Body *muſt be ſo too. And therefore if you have any true kindneſs to your* Body, *ſhew it by taking Care for your* Souls. *Think with your ſelves, how you will be able to endure* Everlaſting Burnings. *If a ſmall ſpark of fire, lighting on the leaſt part of the body, be ſo intolerable, what will it be to have the Whole caſt into the hotteſt flames? And that not for ſome few hours or days, but for ever? So that when you have ſpent many* Thouſands *of years in that unſpeakable Torment, you ſhall be no nearer coming out of it, than you were the Firſt day you went in: Think of this, I ſay, and think this withal, that this will certainly be the end of Neglecting the* Soul, *and therefore afford it ſome care, if it be but in pity to the* Body, *that muſt bear a part in its Miſeries.*

The danger the Soul is in.

7. *The* Third Motive *to the care of any thing, is its being in* DANGER; *now a thing may be in danger two ways: Firſt, by* Enemies *from without: This is the Caſe of the* Sheep, *which is ſtill in danger of being devoured by* Wolves; *and we know that makes the Shepherd ſo much the more watchful over it. Thus it is with the Soul, which is in a great deal of danger, in reſpect of its* enemies: *Thoſe we know are the* World, *the* Fleſh, *and the* Devil; *which are all ſuch noted enemies to it, that the very firſt Act we do in behalf of our* Souls, *is to Vow a continual war againſt them. This we all do in our* Baptiſm; *and whoever makes any truce with any of them, is falſe not only to his Soul, but to his* Vow *alſo; becomes a forſworn creature: A Conſideration well worthy our laying to heart. But that we may the better underſtand, what Danger the Soul is in, let us a little conſider the* quality *of theſe enemies.*

8. *In*

8. *In a war, you know, there are divers things that make an Enemy terrible: The first is* Subtilty *and Cunning, by which alone many victories have been won; and in this respect the* Devil *is a dangerous adversary; he long since gave sufficient proof of his* Subtilty, *in beguiling our first Parents, who yet were much wiser than we are; and therefore no wonder if he deceive and cheat us.* Secondly, *the* Watchfulness *and* Diligence *of an* Enemy *makes him the more to be Feared; and here the* Devil *exceeds: It is his trade and business to destroy us, and he is no loiterer at it,* he goes up and down seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5. 8. *he watches all Opportunities of Advantage against us, with such diligence, that he will be sure never to let any slip him.* Thirdly, *an* Enemy *near us is more to be feared than one at a* Distance: *For if he be far off, we may have time to arm, and prepare our selves against him, but if he be near, he may steal on us unawares. And of this sort is the* flesh, *it is an Enemy, at our Doors, shall I say? nay in our Bosoms, it is always near us, to take occasion of doing us mischiefs.* Fourthly, *the* Baser *and* Falser *an* Enemy *is, the more dangerous. He that hides his malice under the shew of Friendship, will be able to do a great deal the more hurt. And this again is the flesh, which like* Joab *to* Abner, 2 Sam. 3. 27. *pretends to speak* peaceably *to us,* but wounds us to death; *'tis forward to purvey for Pleasures and Delights for us, and so seems very kind, but it has a* hook *under that* bait, *and if we bite at it we are lost.* Fifthly, *the Number of* Enemies *makes them more Terrible; and the* World *is a vast Army against us: There is no state or condition in it, nay, scarce a creature which doth not at some time or other fight against the Soul: The* Honours *of the world seek to wound us by* pride, *the* Wealth *by* covetousness, *the* Prosperity *of it tempts us to forget* God, *the* Adversities *to* murmur *at him. Our very* Table becomes a snare *to us, our meat draws us to* Gluttony, *our drink to* Drunkenness, *our* Company, *nay, our nearest* Friends *often bear a part in this War against us, whilst either by their example, or perswasions they intice us to sin.*

9. *Consider all this, and then tell me, whether a Soul thus beset hath leisure to* sleep: *Even* Dalilah *could tell* Samson, *it was time to* awake *when the* Philistines were upon him. *And* CHRIST *tells us,* If the good man of the house had known in what hour the Thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken up, *Mat.* 24. 43. *But we live in the midst of thieves, and therefore must look for them every hour, and yet who is there among us, that hath that common providence for this precious part of him, his Soul, which he hath for his house, or indeed the meanest thing that belongs to him? I fear our Souls may say so to us, as Christ to his Disciples,* Mat. 26. 40. What? could ye not watch with me one hour? *For I doubt it would pose many of us to tell when we bestowed one Hour on them, though we know them to be continually beset with most dangerous Enemies. And then, alas! what is like to be the case of these poor Souls, when their Adversaries bestow so much Care and diligence to destroy them, and we will afford none to preserve them? Surely the same as of a Besieged Town, where no Watch or Guard is kept, which is certain to fall a prey to the Enemy.* Consider this ye that forget God, *nay, ye that forget your selves, lest* he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you, *Psal.* 50. 22.

10. *But I told you there was a* Second *way, whereby a thing may be in Danger, and that is from some Disorder or Distemper within it self. This is often the case of our* Bodies, *they are not only liable to outward Violence, but they are within themselves Sick and Diseased. And then we can be sensible enough that they are in danger, and need not to be taught to seek out for means to recover them. But this is also the case of the* Soul, *we reckon those parts of the body* diseased, *that do not rightly perform their* office; *we account it a sick palate that tastes not aright, a sick stomach that digests not. And thus it is with the* Soul *when its parts do not rightly perform their* Offices.

11. *The parts of the* Soul *are eſpecially theſe three: The* UNDERSTANDING, *the* WILL, *and the* AFFECTIONS. *And that theſe are diſordered, there needs little proof; let any man look ſeriouſly into his own Heart, and conſider how little it is he knows of ſpiritual things, and then tell me whether his* Underſtanding *be not dark? How much apter is he to* Will evil *than* good, *and then tell me whether his* Will *be not* Crooked? *And how ſtrong* Deſires *he hath after the pleaſures of ſin, and what* cold *and* faint *ones towards God and goodneſs, and then tell me whether his* Affections *be not* diſordered, *and rebellious even againſt the voice of his own reaſon within him? Now as in bodily diſeaſes, the firſt ſtep to the cure is to know the cauſe of the ſickneſs; ſo likewiſe here it is very neceſſary for us to know how the* Soul *firſt fell into this* Diſeaſed condition, *and that I ſhall now briefly tell you.*

The firſt Covenant.

12. GOD *created the firſt Man* Adam *without* Sin, *and indued his* Soul *with the full* knowledge *of his* Duty; *and with ſuch a ſtrength, that he might, if he would, perform all that was required of him. Having thus created him, he makes a* COVENANT *or agreement with him to this purpoſe, that if he* continued *in* Obedience *to* God *without committing Sin; then firſt, that* Strength *of* Soul, *which he then had, ſhould ſtill be continued to him; and* ſecondly, *that he ſhould never die, but be taken up into* Heaven, *there to be Happy for ever. But on the other ſide, if he committed Sin and diſobeyed God, then both He and all his Children after him ſhould loſe that Knowledge and that* perfect Strength, *which enabled him to do all that God required of him: And* ſecondly, *ſhould be ſubject to* death, *and not only ſo, but to Eternal damnation in Hell.*

13. *This was the* Agreement *made with* Adam *and all* Mankind *in him (which we uſually call the* FIRST COVENANT) *upon which God gave* Adam *a particular* Commandment, *which was no more but this, that he ſhould not eat of* one *only* tree *of that* Garden *wherein he had placed him. But he by the perſwaſion of the Devil eats of that Tree, diſobeys* God, *and ſo brings that curſe upon himſelf, and all his poſterity. And ſo by that one* Sin *of his, he loſt both the full* knowledge *of his Duty, and the* Power *of* performing *it. And we being born after his* Image, *did ſo likewiſe, and ſo are become both* Ignorant *in diſcerning what we ought to Do, and* Weak *and unable to the doing of it, having a backwardneſs to all* good, *and an aptneſs, and readineſs to all evil; like a ſick* ſtomach, *which loaths all wholeſom food, and longs after ſuch traſh, as may nouriſh the diſeaſe.*

14. *And now you ſee where we got this ſickneſs of Soul, and likewiſe that it is like to prove a deadly one, and therefore I preſume I need ſay no more, to aſſure you our Souls are in danger. It is more likely you will from this deſcription think them hopeleſs. But that you may not from that conceit excuſe your Neglect of them, I ſhall haſten to ſhew you the contrary, by proceeding to the* fourth *Motive of Care.*

That our Care will not be in vain.

15. *That* Fourth Motive *is the* likelihood, *that our* CARE *will not be in* VAIN, *but that it will be a means to preſerve the thing cared for; where this is wanting, it diſheartens our care. A Phyſician leaves his* Patient *when he ſees him paſt* Hope, *as knowing it is then in vain to give him any thing: But on the contrary when he ſees hope of recovery, he plies him with Medicines. Now in this very reſpect we have a great deal of reaſon to take care of our Souls, for they are not ſo far gone, but they may be recovered, nay, it is certain they will, if we do our parts towards it.*

16. *For though by that ſin of* Adam *all Mankind were under the ſentence of eternal condemnation, yet it pleaſed God ſo far to pity our miſery, as to give us his Son, and in him to make a new Covenant with us, after we had broken the firſt.*

17. *This*

17. *This* SECOND COVENANT *was made with* Adam *and us in him, presently after his Fall, and is briefly contained in those words,* Gen. 3. 15. *where God* declares, that THE SEED OF THE WOMAN SHALL BREAK THE SERPENTS HEAD; *and this was made up, as the first was, of some mercies to be afforded by God, and some duties to be performed by us.* The second Covenant.

18. *God therein promises to send his only* Son, *who is* God equal *with himself, to Earth, to become* man like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, *and he to do for us these several things.*

19. First, *to make* known *to us the* whole Will *of his* Father; *in the performance whereof we shall be sure to be Accepted and rewarded by him. And this was one great part of his business, which he performed in those many Sermons and Precepts we find set down in the* Gospel. *And herein he is our* PROPHET, *it being the work of a* Prophet *of old not only to* foretel, *but to* Teach. *Our duty in this particular is to hearken diligently to him, to be most ready and desirous to learn that will of God which he came from Heaven to reveal to us.*

20. *The* Second *thing He was to do for us, was to* Satisfie God *for our* Sins, *not only that one of* Adam, *but all the Sins of all Mankind that truly repent and amend, and by this means to obtain for us Forgiveness of Sins, the Favour of God, and so to Redeem us from Hell and eternal damnation, which was the punishment due to our sin. All this he did for us by his death. He offered up himself a Sacrifice for the* Sins of all those *who heartily bewail, and forsake them. And in this He is our* PRIEST, *it being the* Priests *Office to* Offer Sacrifice for the sins of the People. *Our duty in this particular is first, truly and heartily to Repent us of, and forsake our sins, without which they will never be forgiven us, though Christ have died.* Secondly, *stedfastly to* Believe, *that if we do that, we shall have the benefits of that* Sacrifice *of his; all our sins, how many and great soever, shall be forgiven us, and we saved from those eternal punishments which were due unto us for them.* Another *part of the* PRIESTS Office *was* Blessing *and* Praying *for the People; and this also Christ performs to us. It was his special Commission from his Father to Bless us, as S.* Peter *tells us,* Acts 3. 26. God sent his Son Jesus to bless you; *and the following words shew wherein that blessing consists, in* turning away every one of you from his iniquity: *Those means which he has used for the turning us from our Sins, are to be reckoned of all other the greatest Blessings; and for the other part, that of* Praying, *that he not only performed on Earth, but continues still to do it in Heaven,* He sits on the right hand of God, and makes request for us, *Rom.* 8. 34. *Our duty herein is, not to resist this unspeakable blessing of his, but to be willing to be thus blest in the being* turned from our sins, *and not to make void and fruitless all his* Prayers *and* Intercessions *for us, which will never prevail for us, whilst we continue in them.*

21. *The* third *thing, that* Christ *was to do for us, was to* Enable *us, or give us* Strength *to do what God requires of us. This he doth,* first, *by taking off from the hardness of the Law given to* Adam, *which was, never to commit the least sin, upon pain of damnation, and requiring of us only an* honest *and* hearty endeavour *to do what we are able, and where we fail, accepting of* Sincere Repentance. Secondly, *By sending his* Holy Spirit into our hearts *to govern and Rule us, to give us strength to overcome Temptations to Sin, and to do all that He now under the Gospel requires of us. And in this he is our* KING, *it being the office of a* King *to govern and rule, and to subdue enemies. Our duty in this particular is to give up our selves obedient subjects of his, to be governed and ruled by him, to obey all his Laws, not to take part with any Rebel, that is, not to cherish any one sin, but diligently to Pray for his* Grace *to enable us to subdue all, and then carefully to make use of it to that purpose.*

22. Lastly,

22. Laſtly, *He has purchaſed for all that faithfully* obey *him, an* Eternal glorious *inheritance, the* Kingdom *of* Heaven, *whither he is gone before to take poſſeſſion for us. Our duty herein is to be exceeding careful, that we forfeit not our parts in it, which we ſhall certainly do, if we continue impenitent in any ſin.* Secondly, *not to faſten our* Affections *on this world, but to raiſe them according to the precept of the Apoſtle,* Col. 3. 2. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; *continually longing to come to the poſſeſſion of that bleſſed Inheritance of ours, in compariſon whereof all things here below ſhould ſeem vile and mean to us.*

23. *This is the Sum of that* SECOND COVENANT *we are now under, wherein you ſee what* Chriſt *hath done, how he Executes thoſe* Three Great Offices *of* KING, PRIEST *and* PROPHET: *as alſo what is required of us, without our faithful Performance of which, all that he hath done, ſhall never ſtand us in any ſtead; for he will never be a* Prieſt *to ſave any, who take him not as well for their* Prophet *to* Teach, *and their* King *to* Rule *them; nay, if we neglect our part of this* Covenant, *our condition will be yet worſe, than if it had never been made; for we ſhall then be to Anſwer, not for the breach of Law only, as in the* firſt, *but for the abuſe of mercy, which is of all ſins the moſt provoking. On the other ſide, if we faithfully perform it, that is, ſet our ſelves heartily to the obeying of every Precept of Chriſt, not going on wilfully in any one ſin, but bewailing and forſaking whatever we have formerly been guilty of, it is then moſt certain, that all the forementioned benefits of Chriſt belong to us.*

24. *And now you ſee how little Reaſon you have, to caſt off the* CARE *of your* SOULS, *upon a conceit they are paſt cure, for that it is plain they are not; Nay certainly they are in that very condition, which of all others makes them fitteſt for our care. If they had not been thus* REDEEMED *by* CHRIST, *they had been then ſo hopeleſs, that care would have been in vain; on the other ſide, if his Redemption had been ſuch that* all *men ſhould be ſaved by it, though they live as they liſt, we ſhould have thought it needleſs to take care for them, becauſe they were ſafe without it. But it hath pleaſed* God *ſo to order it, that our care muſt be the* means, *by which they muſt receive the good even of all that* Chriſt *hath done for them.*

25. *And now if after all that* God *hath done to ſave theſe* Souls *of ours, we will not beſtow a little* Care *on them our ſelves, we very well deſerve to periſh. If a* Phyſician *ſhould undertake a Patient that were in ſome deſperate diſeaſe, and by his skill bring him ſo far out of it, that he were ſure to recover, if he would but take care of himſelf, and obſerve thoſe* rules *the Phyſician ſet him, would you not think that man weary of his life, that* would refuſe to do that? *So certainly that man is* weary *of his* Soul, *wilfully caſts it away, that will not conſent to thoſe eaſie conditions, by which he may ſave it.*

26. *You ſee how great* kindneſs *God hath to theſe Souls of ours, the whole* TRINITY, Father, Son, *and* HOLY Ghoſt *have all done their parts for them. The* FATHER *gave his only Son, the* SON *gave Himſelf, left his Glory, and endured the bitter death of the* Croſs, *meerly to keep our* Souls *from periſhing. The* HOLY GHOST *is become as it were our Attendant, waits upon us with continual offers of his Grace, to enable us to do that which may preſerve them; nay he is ſo deſirous we ſhould accept thoſe Offers of his, that he is ſaid to be* grieved *when we refuſe them,* Epheſ. 4. 30. *Now what greater diſgrace and affront can we put upon God, than to deſpiſe what he thus values? that thoſe Souls of ours, which Chriſt thought worthy every drop of his* bloud, *we ſhould not think worth any part of our* Care? *We uſe in things of the world, to rate them according to the opinion of thoſe who are beſt ſkilled*

in

in them: Now certainly God *who made our* Souls, *beſt knows the* worth *of them, and ſince he prizes them ſo high, let us (if it be but in reverence to him) be aſhamed to neglect them. Eſpecially now that they are in ſo hopeful a condition, that nothing but our own careleſneſs can poſſibly deſtroy them.*

27. *I have now briefly gone over thoſe* Four motives *of care I at firſt propoſed, which are each of them ſuch as never miſſes to ſtir it up towards the things of this World; and I have alſo ſhewed you how much more Reaſonable, nay, Neceſſary it is they ſhould do the like for the* Soul. *And now what can I ſay more, but conclude in the words of* Iſaiah 46. 8. Remember this, and ſhew your ſelves men. *That is, deal with your* Soul *as your* Reaſon *teaches you to do with all other things that concern you. And ſure this common* Juſtice *binds you to; for the Soul is that which furniſhes you with that* Reaſon, *which you exerciſe in all your worldly buſineſs; and ſhall the Soul it ſelf receive no* Benefit *from that* Reaſon *which it affords you? This is, as if a* Maſter *of a* Family, *who provides food for his ſervants ſhould by them be kept from Eating any himſelf, and ſo remain the only ſtarved creature in his houſe.*

28. *And as Juſtice ties you to this, ſo* Mercy *doth likewiſe; you know the poor Soul will fall into Endleſs and unſpeakable Miſeries, if you continue to neglect it, and then it will be too late to conſider it. The laſt Refuge you can hope for, is* Gods mercy, *but that you have deſpiſed and abuſed. And with what face can you in your greateſt need beg for* his *mercy to your* Souls, *when you would not afford them your* own? *No, not that common* Charity *of conſidering them, of beſtowing a few of thoſe idle* Hours, *you know not (ſcarce) how to paſs away, upon them.*

29. *Lay this to your hearts, and as ever you hope for* Gods pity, *when you moſt want it, be ſure in time to* pity *your ſelves, by taking that due care of your* Precious Souls *which belongs to them.*

30. *If what hath been ſaid, have perſwaded you to this ſo* neceſſary *a* Duty, *my next work will be to tell you how this* Care *muſt be imployed; and that, in a word, is in the doing of all thoſe things which tend to the making the Soul happy, which is the end of our* Care, *and what thoſe are I come now to ſhew you.*

THE

THE Whole Duty of Man.

SUNDAY I.

Of the Duty *of* Man *by the Light of Nature, by the Light of Scripture: The Three great branches of Mans Duty, to God, our Selves, our Neighbour: Our Duty to God; of* Faith, *the Promises, of Hope, of Love, of Fear, of Truſt.*

THE Benefits purchaſed for us by *Chriſt*, are ſuch as will undoubtedly make the Soul Happy; for Eternal Happineſs it ſelf is one of them: But becauſe theſe Benefits belong not to us till we perform the Condition required of us; whoever deſires the happineſs of his Soul, muſt ſet himſelf to the performing of that Condition. What that is, I have already mentioned in the general, *That it is the hearty, honeſt endeavour of obeying the whole will of God.* But then that will of God containing under it many particulars, it is neceſſary we ſhould alſo know what thoſe are; that is, what are the ſeveral things, that God now requires of us, our performance whereof will bring us to everlaſting happineſs, and the neglect to endleſs miſery.

2. Of theſe things there are ſome which God hath ſo ſtamped upon our Souls, that we Naturally know them; that is, we ſhould have known them to be our Duty, though we had never been told ſo by the Scripture. That this is ſo, we may ſee by thoſe Heathens, who having never heard of either Old or New Teſtament, do yet acknowledge themſelves bound to ſome general Duties, as to Worſhip God, to be Juſt, to honour their Parents, and the like; and as S. *Paul* ſaith, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Their Conſciences do in thoſe things accuſe or excuſe them*; that is, tell them, whether they have done what they ſhould in thoſe particulars or no. *Of the light of Nature.*

3. Now though Chriſt hath brought greater light into the world, yet he never meant by it to put out any of that Natural light, which God hath ſet up in our Souls: Therefore let me here, by the way, adviſe you not to walk contrary even to this leſſer light. I mean not to venture on any of thoſe Acts, which meer Natural Conſcience will tell you are ſins.

4. It is juſt matter of ſadneſs to any Chriſtian heart, to ſee ſome in theſe days, who profeſs much of Religion, and yet live in ſuch ſins, as a meer Heathen would abhor; men that pretending to higher degrees of light, and holineſs, than their brethren do, yet practiſe contrary to all the Rules of common honeſty, and make it part of their Chriſtian liberty ſo to do; of whoſe ſeducement it concerns all that love their Souls to beware: And for that purpoſe let this be laid as a Foundation, *That that Religion or Opinion cannot be of God, which allows men in any wickedneſs.*

5. But though we muſt not put out this light which God hath thus put into our Souls, yet this is not the only way whereby God hath revealed his will; and therefore we are not to reſt here, but proceed to the knowledge of thoſe other things which God hath by other means revealed.

The light of Scriptures. 6. The way for us to come to know them is by the Scriptures, wherein are ſet down thoſe ſeveral commands of God which he hath given to be the Rule of our Duty.

7. Of thoſe, ſome were given before Chriſt came into the world, ſuch are thoſe precepts we find ſcattered throughout the Old Teſtament, but eſpecially contained in the Ten Commandments, and that excellent Book of *Deuteronomy*; others were given by Chriſt, who added much, both to the Law implanted in us by Nature, and that of the Old Teſtament; and thoſe you ſhall find in the New Teſtament, in the ſeveral Precepts given by him and his Apoſtles, but eſpecially in that Divine Sermon on the Mount, ſet down in the fifth, ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of S. *Matthew*'s Goſpel.

8. All theſe ſhould be ſeverally ſpoke to, but becauſe that would make the diſcourſe very long, and ſo leſs fit for the meaner ſort of men, for whoſe uſe alone it is intended, I chuſe to proceed in another manner; by ſumming up all theſe together, and ſo as plainly as I can, to lay down, what is now the duty of every Chriſtian.

The Three great branches of mans Duty. 9. This I find briefly contained in the words of the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 2. 12. *That we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*; where the word *Soberly*, contains our *duty* to our *ſelves*; *Righteouſly*, our duty to our *neighbour*; and *Godly*, our *duty* to *God*. Theſe therefore ſhall be the Heads of my Diſcourſe, our DUTY to GOD, our SELVES, and our NEIGHBOUR. I begin with that to *God*, that being the beſt ground-work whereon to build both the other.

Duty to God. 10. There are many parts of our DUTY to GOD; the two chief are theſe: Firſt, to acknowledge him to be God; Secondly, to have no other. Under theſe are contained all thoſe particulars, which make up our whole duty to God, which ſhall be ſhewed in their order.

Acknowledging him to be God. 11. To acknowledge him to be God, is to believe him to be an infinite glorious Spirit, that was from everlaſting, without beginning, and ſhall be to everlaſting, without end. That he is our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God, bleſſed for ever. That he is ſubject to no alteration, but is unchangeable; that he is no bodily ſubſtance, ſuch as our eyes may behold, but ſpiritual and inviſible, whom *no man hath ſeen nor can ſee*, as the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. That he is infinitely great and Excellent, beyond all that our wit or conceit can imagine; that he hath received his being from none, and gives being to all things.

12. All this we are to believe of him in regard of his Eſſence and being: But beſides this, he is ſet forth to us in the *Scripture* by ſeveral *Excellencies*, as that he is of Infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, Truth, Juſtice, Wiſdom, Power, All-ſufficiency, Majeſty; that he diſpoſes and governs all things by his Providence; that he knows all things, and is preſent in all places; theſe are by Divines called the Attributes of God, and all theſe we muſt undoubtingly acknowledge, that is, we muſt firmly believe all theſe Divine Excellencies to be in God, and that in the greateſt degree; and ſo, that they can never ceaſe to be in him, he can never be other than *infinitely Good, Merciful, True*, &c.

13. But the acknowledging him for our God ſignifies yet more than this; it means that we ſhould perform to him all thoſe ſeveral parts of Duty which belong from a Creature to his God: what thoſe are I am now to tell you.

14. The

14. The first is FAITH, or Belief, not only that forementioned of his Essence and Attributes, but of his Word, the believing most firmly, that all that he saith is perfectly true. This necessarily arises from that attribute, his Truth, it being natural for us to believe whatsoever is said of one of whose truth we are confident. Now the holy Scriptures being the Word of God, we are therefore to conclude, that all that is contained in them is most true. *Faith.*

15. The things contained in them are of these four sorts: First, Affirmations, such are all the stories of the Bible, when it is said such and such things came so and so to pass; Christ was born of a Virgin, was laid in a Manger, *&c.* And such also are many points of Doctrine, as that there are three persons in the *Godhead*, that *Christ* is the *Son of God*, and the like. All things of this sort thus delivered in Scripture we are to believe most true. And not only so, but because they are all written for our instruction, we are to consider them for that purpose, that is, by them to lay that Foundation of Christian knowledge, on which we may build a Christian life. *of his Affirmations.*

16. The second sort of things contained in the Scripture, are the *Commands*, that is, the several things enjoyned us by God to perform; these we are to believe to come from him, and to be most just and fit for him to command: But then this belief must bring forth obedience, that what we believe thus fit to be done, be indeed done by us; otherwise our belief that they come from him serves but to make us more inexcusable. *Commands.*

17. Thirdly, the Scripture contains threatnings; many Texts there are which threaten to them that go on in their sins, the wrath of God, and under that are contained all the punishments and miseries of this life, both spiritual and temporal, and everlasting destruction in the life to come. Now we are most stedfastly to believe, that these are Gods threats, and that they will certainly be performed to every impenitent sinner. But then the use we are to make of this belief is to keep from those sins to which this destruction is threatned; otherwise our belief adds to our guilt, that will wilfully go on in spight of those threatnings. *Threatnings.*

18. Fourthly, the Scripture contains Promises, and those both to our Bodies and our Souls; for our Bodies there are many promises that God will provide for them what he sees necessary, I will name only one, *Mat.* 6. 33. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things*, that is, all outward necessaries *shall be added unto you*; but here it is to be observed, that we must *first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, that is, make it our first and greatest care to serve and obey him, before this promise even of temporal good things belong to us. To the Soul there are many and high promises, as first, that of present ease and refreshment, which we find, *Mat.* 11. 29. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your Souls:* But here it is apparent, that before this rest belongs to us, we must have *taken on us Christs yoke*, become his Servants and Disciples. Finally, there are promises to the Soul even of all the benefits of Christ; but yet those only to such as perform the Condition required; that is, Pardon of sins to those that repent of them, Increase of Grace to those that diligently make use of what they have already, and humbly pray for more; and Eternal Salvation to those that continue to their lives end in hearty obedience to his Commands. *Promises.*

19. This Belief of the Promises must therefore stir us up to perform the Condition, and till it do so, we can in no reason expect any good by them: And for us to look for the benefit of them on other terms, is the same

mad presumption that it would be in a Servant to challenge his Master to give him a reward for having done nothing of his work, to which alone the reward was promised; you can easily resolve what answer were to be given to such a Servant, and the same we are to expect from God in this case. Nay further, it is sure God hath given these promises to no other end, but to invite us to holiness of life; yea, he gave his Son, in whom all his promises are as it were summ'd up, for this end. We usually look so much at Christ's coming to satisfie for us, that we forget this other part of his errand. But there is nothing surer, than that the main purpose of his coming into the world was to plant good life among men.

20. This is so often repeated in Scripture, that no man that considers and believes what he reads can doubt of it. Christ himself tells us, *Mat.* 9. 13. *He came to call sinners to repentance.* And S. *Peter*, *Acts* 3. 26. tells us, *That God sent his Son Jesus to bless us, in turning every one of us from our iniquities*; for it seems the *turning us from our iniquities* was the greatest special Blessing which God intended us in Christ.

21. Nay, we are taught by S. *Paul*, that this was the end of his very death also, *Tit.* 2. 14. *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* And again, *Gal.* 1. 4. *Who gave himself for us that he might deliver us from this present evil world*, that is from the sins and ill customs of the world. Divers other Texts there are to this purpose; but these I suppose sufficient to assure any man of this one great truth, that all that Christ hath done for us was directed to this end, the bringing us to live Christianly; or in the words of S. *Paul*, *To teach us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.*

22. Now we know Christ is the foundation of all the promises; *in him all the promises of God are yea, and Amen*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. And therefore if God gave Christ to this end, certainly the Promises are to the same also. And then how great an abuse of them is it to make them serve for purposes quite contrary to what they were intended? *viz.* to the incouraging us in sins, which they will certainly do, if we perswade our selves they belong to us, how wickedly soever we live. The Apostle teaches us another use of them, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* When we do thus, we may justly apply the promises to our selves, and with comfort expect our parts in them. But till then, though these promises be of certain truth, yet we can reap no benefit from them, because we are not the persons to whom they are made, that is, we perform not the condition required to give us right to them.

23. This is the Faith or belief required of us towards the things God hath revealed to us in the Scripture, to wit, such as may answer the end for which they were so revealed, that is, the bringing us to good lives; the bare believing the truth of them, without this, is no more than the Devils do, as S. *James* tells us, Chap. 2. 19. Only they are not so unreasonable as some of us are, for they will tremble as knowing well this Faith will never do them any good. But many of us go on confidently, and doubt not the sufficiency of our Faith, though we have not the least fruit of obedience to approve it by; let such hear S. *James*'s judgment in the point, Chap. 2. 26. *As the body without the spirit is dead, so Faith if it have not works is dead also.*

Hope. 24. A second duty to God is HOPE, that is, a comfortable expectation of these good things he hath promised. But this, as I told you before

of

of Faith, muſt be ſuch as agrees to the nature of the promiſes, which being ſuch as requires a condition on our part, we can hope no further than we make that good; or if we do, we are ſo far from performing by it this duty of Hope, that we commit the great ſin of Preſumption, which is nothing elſe but hoping where God hath given us no ground to hope: This every man doth, that hopes for pardon of ſins and eternal life, without that repentance and obedience to which alone they are promiſed; the true hope is that which purifies us, S. *John* ſaith 1 Ep. 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure*; that is, it makes him leave his ſins, and earneſtly endeavour to be holy as Chriſt is, and that which doth not ſo, how confident ſoever it be, may well be concluded to be but that hope of the Hypocrite, which *Job* aſſures us ſhall periſh. *Preſumption.*

25. But there is another way of tranſgreſſing this Duty, beſides that of Preſumption, and that is by Deſperation, by which I mean not that which is ordinarily ſo called, *viz.* the deſpairing of mercy, ſo long as we continue in our ſins, for that is but juſt for us to do: But I mean ſuch a deſperation as makes us give over endeavour, that is, when a man that ſees he is not at the preſent ſuch a one as the promiſes belong to, concludes, he can never become ſuch, and therefore neglects all duty, and goes on in his ſins. This is indeed the ſinful deſperation, and that which if it be continued in, muſt end in deſtruction. *Deſpair.*

26. Now the work of hope is to prevent this, by ſetting before us the generality of the promiſes, that they belong to all that will but perform the condition. And therefore though a man have not hitherto performed it, and ſo hath yet no right to them, yet hope will tell him, that that right may yet be gained, if he will now ſet heartily about it. It is therefore ſtrange folly for any man, be he never ſo ſinful, to give up himſelf for loſt, when if he will but change his courſe, he ſhall be as certain to partake of the promiſes of mercy, as if he had never gone on in thoſe former ſins.

27. This Chriſt ſhews us in the parable of the prodigal, *Luke* 15. where we ſee that Son, which had run away from his Father, and had conſumed the portion given him, in riotous living, was yet upon his return and repentance uſed with as much kindneſs by the Father, as he that had never offended, nay with higher and more paſſionate expreſſions of love. The intent of which Parable was only to ſhew us how graciouſly our heavenly Father will receive us, how great ſoever our former ſins have been, if we ſhall return to him with true ſorrow for what is paſt, and ſincere obedience for the time to come; nay ſo acceptable a thing is it to God, to have any ſinner return from the error of his ways, that there is a kind of triumph in Heaven for it, *There is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth, Luke* 15. 10. And now who would not rather chuſe by a timely repentance, to bring joy to Heaven, to God and his holy Angels, than by a ſullen deſperation to pleaſe Satan and his accurſed ſpirits; eſpecially when by the former we ſhall gain endleſs happineſs to our ſelves, and by the latter as endleſs torments?

28. A third Duty to God is LOVE; there are two common Motives of love among men. The one the goodneſs and excellency of the perſon, the other his particular kindneſs, and love to us; and both theſe are in the higheſt degree in God. *Love its Motives.*

29. Firſt, he is of infinite goodneſs, and excellency in himſelf; this you were before taught to believe of him, and no man can doubt it that conſiders *Gods excellency.*

ſiders but this one thing, that there is nothing good in the world, but what hath received all its goodneſs from God: His goodneſs is as the Sea, or Ocean, and the goodneſs of all Creatures but as ſome ſmall ſtreams flowing from the Sea. Now you would certainly think him a mad man, that ſhould ſay the Sea were not greater than ſome little Brook: And certainly it is no leſs folly to ſuppoſe, that the goodneſs of God doth not as much (nay infinitely more) exceed that of all creatures. Beſides, the goodneſs of the Creature is imperfect and mixt with much evil; but his is pure and entire without any ſuch mixture. He is perfectly Holy and cannot be tainted with the leaſt impurity, neither can be the Author of any to us; for though he be the cauſe of all the goodneſs in us, he is the cauſe of none of our ſins. This S. *James* expreſly tells us, Chap. 1. 13. *Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.*

His kindneſs to us.

30. But ſecondly, God is not only thus good in himſelf, but he is alſo wonderful good, that is, kind and merciful to us. We are made up of two parts, a Soul and a Body, and to each of theſe God hath expreſſed infinite mercy and tenderneſs. Do but conſider what was before told you of the SECOND COVENANT, and the mercies therein offered, even Chriſt himſelf and all his benefits, and alſo that he offers them ſo ſincerely and heartily, that no man can miſs of enjoying them but by his own default. For he doth moſt really and affectionately deſire we ſhould embrace them and live; as appears by that ſolemn Oath of his, *Ezek.* 33. 11. *As I live ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live:* Whereto he adds this paſſionate expreſſion, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?* To the ſame purpoſe you may read *Ezek.* 18. Conſider this, I ſay, and then ſurely you cannot but ſay, he hath great kindneſs to our Souls. Nay, let every man but remember with himſelf the many calls he hath had to repentance and amendment; ſometimes outward by the Word, ſometimes inward by the ſecret whiſpers of Gods Spirit in his heart, which were only to woo and intreat him to avoid Eternal miſery, and to accept of Eternal happineſs: Let him, I ſay, remember theſe, together with thoſe many other means God hath uſed toward him for the ſame end, and he will have reaſon to confeſs Gods kindneſs, not only to mens Souls in general, but to his own in particular.

31. Neither hath he been wanting to our Bodies; all the good things they enjoy, as health, ſtrength, food, raiment, and whatever elſe concerns them, are meerly his gifts: So that indeed it is impoſſible we ſhould be ignorant of his mercies to them, all thoſe outward comforts and refreſhments we daily enjoy, being continual effects and witneſſes of it; and though ſome enjoy more of theſe than others, yet there is no perſon but enjoys ſo much in one kind or other, as abundantly ſhews Gods mercy and kindneſs to him in reſpect of his Body.

32. And now ſurely you will think it but reaſonable we ſhould Love him, who is in all reſpects thus Lovely: Indeed this is a duty ſo generally acknowledged, that if you ſhould ask any man the queſtion, whether he loved God or no, he would think you did him great wrong to doubt of it; yet for all this, it is too plain, that there are very few, that do indeed love him; and this will ſoon be proved to you by examining a little, what are the common effects of love, which we bear to men like our ſelves, and then trying, whether we can ſhew any ſuch fruits of our love to God.

33. Of that ſort there are divers, but for ſhortneſs I will name but two. The firſt is a deſire of pleaſing, the ſecond a deſire of enjoyment. Theſe are conſtantly the fruits of Love. For the firſt, 'tis known by all, that he that loves any perſon is very deſirous to approve himſelf to him, to do whatſoever he thinks will be pleaſing to him; and according to the degree of love, ſo is this deſire more or leſs; where we love earneſtly, we are very earneſt, and careful to pleaſe. Now if we have indeed that love to God, we pretend to, it will bring forth this fruit, we ſhall be careful to pleaſe him in all things. Therefore as you judge of the *tree by its fruits*, ſo may you judge of your love of God, by this fruit of it; nay indeed this is the way of trial, which Chriſt himſelf hath given us, *John* 14. 15. *If you love me keep my Commandments*, and S. *John* tells us, 1 Ep. 5. 3. *That this is the love of God, that we walk after his Commandments*, and where this one proof is wanting, it will be impoſſible to teſtifie our love to God. *Fruit of Love, deſire of pleaſing.*

34. But it muſt yet be farther conſidered, that this love of God muſt not be in a low or weak degree; for beſides that the motives to it, His Excellency and his kindneſs, are in the higheſt, the ſame commandment which bids us love God, bids us *love him with all our hearts, and with all our ſtrength*, that is, as much as is poſſible for us, and above any thing elſe. And therefore to the fulfilling this commandment, it is neceſſary we love him in that degree; and if we do ſo, then certainly we ſhall have not only ſome ſlight and faint endeavours of pleaſing, but ſuch as are moſt diligent and earneſt, ſuch as will put us upon the moſt painful and coſtly duties, make us willing to forſake our own eaſe, goods, friends, yea life it ſelf, when we cannot keep them without diſobeying God.

35. Now examine thy ſelf by this; haſt thou this fruit of love to ſhew? Doſt thou make it thy conſtant and greateſt care to keep Gods Commandments? To obey him in all things? Earneſtly labouring to pleaſe him to the utmoſt of thy power, even to the forſaking of what is deareſt to thee in this world? If thou doſt, thou mayeſt then truly ſay thou loveſt God. But on the contrary, if thou wilfully continueſt in the breach of many, nay, but of any one Command of his, never deceive thy ſelf, for the love of God abides not in thee. This will be made plain to you, if you conſider what the Scripture ſaith of ſuch, as that they *are enemies to God by their wicked works*, *Col.* 1. 21. that the carnal mind (and ſuch is every one that continues *wilfully in ſin*) is *enmity with God*, *Rom.* 8. 7. that he that *ſins wilfully, tramples under foot the Son of God, and doth deſpight unto the Spirit of Grace*, *Heb.* 10. 29. and many the like. And therefore unleſs you can think enmity and trampling, and deſpight to be fruits of love, you muſt not believe you love God, whilſt you go on in a wilful diſobedience to him.

36. A ſecond fruit of Love, I told you, was deſire of Enjoying. This is conſtantly to be ſeen in our love to one another. If you have a friend whom you entirely love, you deſire his converſation, wiſh to be always in his company: And thus will it be alſo in our love to God, if that be as great and hearty as this. *Deſire of Enjoying.*

37. There is a twofold Enjoying of God, the one Imperfect in this life, the other more Perfect and complete in the life to come; that in this life is that converſation, as I may call it, which we have with God in his Ordinances, in Praying and Meditating, in hearing his Word, in receiving the Sacrament, which are all intended for this purpoſe, to bring us into an intimacy and familiarity with God by ſpeaking to him, and hearing him ſpeak to us.

38. Now

38. Now if we do indeed love God, we ſhall certainly hugely value and deſire theſe ways of converſing with him; it being all that we can have in this life, it will make us with *David* eſteem *one day in Gods Courts better than a thouſand, Pſal.* 84. 10. We ſhall be glad to have theſe opportunities of approaching to him as often as it is poſſible, and be careful to uſe them diligently, to that end of uniting us ſtill more to him; yea we ſhall come to theſe ſpiritual exerciſes with the ſame chearfulneſs we would go to our deareſt friend. And if indeed we do thus, it is a good proof of our Love.

39. But I fear there are not many have this to ſhew for it, as appears by the common backwardneſs and unwillingneſs of Men to come to theſe; and their negligence and heartleſneſs when they are at them; and can we think that God will ever own us for lovers of him, whilſt we have ſuch diſlike to his company, that we will never come into it but when we are dragg'd by fear, or ſhame of men, or ſome ſuch worldly Motive? It is ſure you would not think that man loved you, whom you perceive to ſhun your company, and be loth to come in your ſight. And therefore be not ſo unreaſonable as to ſay, You love God, when yet you deſire to keep as far from him as you can.

40. But beſides this there is another Enjoyment of God, which is more perfect and complete, and that is our perpetual enjoying of him in Heaven, where we ſhall be for ever united to him, and enjoy him not now and then only for ſhort ſpaces of time, as we do here, but continually without interruption, or breaking off. And certainly if we have that degree of love to God we ought, this cannot but be moſt earneſtly deſired by us ſo much, that we ſhall think no labour too great to compaſs it. The ſeven years that *Jacob* ſerved for *Rachel*, Gen. 29. 20. *ſeemed to him but a few days for the love that he had to her*: And ſurely if we have love to God, we ſhall not think the ſervice of our whole lives too dear a price for this full Enjoyment of him, nor eſteem all the Enjoyments of the world worth the looking on in compariſon thereof.

41. If we can truly tell our ſelves we do thus long for this enjoyment of God, we may believe we love him. But I fear again there are but few that can thus approve their love. For if we look into mens lives, we ſhall ſee they are not generally ſo fond of this Enjoyment, as to be at any pains to purchaſe it. And not only ſo, but it is to be doubted, there are many who if it were put to their choice, whether they would live here always to enjoy the profit and pleaſure of the world, or go to Heaven to enjoy God, would like the children of *Gad* and *Reuben*, ſet up their reſt on this ſide *Jordan*, *Numb.* 32. and never deſire that heavenly *Canaan*; ſo cloſe do their affections cleave to things below, which ſhews clearly they have not made God their treaſure, for then according to our Saviours Rule, *Mat.* 6. 22. their heart would be with him. Nay, further yet; it is too plain that many of us ſet ſo little value on this enjoying of God, that we prefer the vileſt and baſeſt ſins before him, and chuſe to enjoy them, though by it we utterly loſe our parts in him, which is the caſe of every man that continues wilfully in thoſe ſins.

42. And now I fear, according to theſe Rules of Trial, many that profeſs to love God, will be found not to do ſo. I conclude all with the words of S. *John*, 1 *Ep.* 3. 18. which though ſpoken of the love of our brethren, is very fitly appliable to this love of God, *Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

43. A Fourth

43. A Fourth duty to God is FEAR; this ariſes from the conſideration both of his juſtice and his power; his Juſtice is ſuch, that he will not clear the wicked, and his Power ſuch, that he is able to inflict the ſoreſt puniſhments upon them; and that this is a reaſonable cauſe of fear, Chriſt himſelf tells us, *Mat.* 10. 28. *Fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in Hell.* Many other places of Scripture there are, which commend to us this duty, as *Pſal.* 2. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear.* Pſal. 34. 9. *Fear the Lord ye that be his Saints.* Prov. 9. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom,* and divers the like; and indeed all the threatnings of wrath againſt ſinners, which we meet with in the Scripture, are only to this end, to work this fear in our hearts. *Fear.*

44. Now this fear is nothing elſe, but ſuch an awful regard of God, as may keep us from offending him. This the Wiſe man tells us, *Prov.* 16. 17. *The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil:* ſo that none can be ſaid truly to fear God, that is not thereby withheld from ſin; and this is but anſwerable to that common fear we have towards men; who ever we know may hurt us, we will beware of provoking; and therefore if we be not as wary of diſpleaſing God, it is plain we fear Men more than we do him.

45. How great a madneſs this is, thus to fear Men above God, will ſoon appear, if we compare what Man can do to us with that which God can. And firſt, it is ſure, it is not in the power of man (I might ſay Devils too) to do us any hurt, unleſs God permit and ſuffer them to do it; ſo that if we do but keep him our friend, we may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord is on my ſide, I fear not what man can do unto me.* For let their malice be never ſo great, he can reſtrain and keep them from hurting us; nay he can change their minds towards us, according to that of the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 16. 7. *When a mans ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* A notable example of this we have in *Jacob, Gen.* 32. who when his brother *Eſau* was coming againſt him as an enemy, God wonderfully turned his heart, ſo that he met him with all the expreſſions of brotherly kindneſs, as you may read in the next Chapter. *The folly of fearing Men more than God.*

46. But ſecondly, Suppoſe men were left at liberty to do thee what miſchief they could; alas! their power goes but a little way; they may perhaps rob thee of thy goods, it may be they may take away thy liberty, or thy credit, or perchance thy life too, but that thou knoweſt is the utmoſt they can do. But now God can do all this when he pleaſes, and that which is infinitely more, his vengeance reaches even beyond death it ſelf, to the eternal miſery both of Body and Soul in Hell; in compariſon of which Death is ſo inconſiderable, that we are not to look upon it with any dread. *Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do,* ſaith Chriſt, *Luke* 12. 4. and then immediately adds, *But I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear, fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into Hell, yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.* In which words the compariſon is ſet between the greateſt ill we can ſuffer from man, the loſs of life, and thoſe ſadder evils God can inflict on us; and the latter are found to be the only dreadful things, and therefore God only to be feared.

47. But there is yet one thing farther conſiderable in this matter, which is this, It is poſſible we may tranſgreſs againſt men and they not know it: I may perhaps ſteal my neighbours goods, or defile his wife, and keep it ſo cloſe that he ſhall not ſuſpect me, and ſo never bring me to puniſhment for it: But this we cannot do with God, he knows all things, even the moſt ſecret thoughts of our hearts; and therefore though we commit a ſin never ſo cloſely, he is ſure to find us, and will as ſurely, if we do not timely repent, puniſh us eternally for it.

48. And now ſurely it cannot but be confeſt that it is much ſafer diſpleaſing men, than God; yet, alas, our practice is as if we believed the direct contrary, there being nothing more ordinary with us, than for the avoiding of ſome preſent danger we fear from men, to ruſh our ſelves upon the indignation of God. And thus it is with us, when either to ſave our eſtates, or credits, or our very lives, we commit any ſin, for that is plainly the chuſing to provoke God, rather than man.

49. But God knows this caſe of fear of men is not the only one wherein we venture to diſpleaſe him; for we commit many ſins, to which we have none of this temptation, nor indeed any other; as for inſtance, that of common ſwearing to which there is nothing either of pleaſure, or profit to invite us. Nay, many times, we, who ſo fear the miſchiefs that other men may do to us, that we are ready to buy them off with the greateſt ſins, do our ſelves bring all thoſe very miſchiefs upon us, by ſins of our own chuſing. Thus the careleſs prodigal robs himſelf of his eſtate, the deceitful and diſhoneſt man, or any that lives in open notorious ſin, deprives himſelf of his credit, and the Drunkard and Glutton brings diſeaſes on himſelf, to the ſhortning his life. And can we think we do at all fear God, when that fear hath ſo little power over us, that though it be backt with the many preſent miſchiefs that attend upon ſin, it is not able to keep us from them? Surely ſuch men are ſo far from fearing *God*, that they rather ſeem to defie him, reſolve to provoke him, whatſoever it coſt them, either in this world or the next. Yet ſo unreaſonably partial are we to our ſelves, that even ſuch as theſe will pretend to this fear: You may examine multitudes of the moſt groſs ſcandalous ſinners, before you ſhall meet with one that will acknowledge he fears not God. It is ſtrange it ſhould be poſſible for men thus to cheat themſelves; but however it is certain we cannot deceive God, he will not be mockt, and therefore if we will not now ſo fear as to avoid ſin, we ſhall one day fear when it will be too late to avoid puniſhment.

Truſt. 50. A fifth duty to God, is that of TRUSTING in him, that is, depending and reſting on him: And that is firſt in all dangers, ſecondly in all wants. We are to reſt on him in all our dangers, both Spiritual and Temporal. Of the firſt ſort, are all thoſe Temptations, by which we are in danger to be drawn to ſin. And in this reſpect he hath promiſed, that *In all ſpiritual dangers.* if we *reſiſt the Devil he ſhall flee from us*, *Jam.* 4. 7. Therefore our duty is firſt to pray earneſtly for Gods grace to enable us to overcome the Temptation, and ſecondly, to ſet our ſelves manfully to combat with it, not yielding or giving conſent to it in the leaſt degree; and whilſt we do thus, we are confidently to reſt upon God, that his grace will be ſufficient for us, that he will either remove the temptation, or ſtrengthen us to withſtand it.

In all Temporal. 51. Secondly, in all outward and Temporal dangers we are to reſt upon him, as knowing that he is able to deliver us, and that he will do ſo if he ſee it beſt for us, and if we be ſuch to whom he hath promiſed his protection, that is, ſuch as truly fear him. To this purpoſe we have many promiſes in Scripture, *Pſal.* 34. 7. *The Angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them:* And *Pſal.* 34. 20. *The Lord delivereth the ſouls of his Saints, and all that put their truſt in him ſhall not be deſtitute*; and divers the like.

Alſo we have many examples, as that of the three children in the Furnace, *Daniel* 3. that of *Daniel* in the Lions Den, *Dan.* 6. and many others; all which ſerve to teach us this one leſſon, that if we go on conſcionably in performing

performing our duty, we need not be diſmayed for any thing that can befal us, for the God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us.

52. Therefore in all dangers we are firſt humbly to pray for his aid, and then to reſt our ſelves chearfully on him; and aſſuring our ſelves that he will give ſuch an iſſue as ſhall be moſt for our good. But above all things, we muſt be ſure to fix our dependance wholly on him, and not to rely on the creatures for help; much leſs muſt we ſeek to deliver our ſelves by any unlawful means, that is, by the committing of any ſin; for that is like *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 18. 7. *to go to the witch*, that is, to the *Devil* for help; ſuch courſes do commonly deceive our hopes at the preſent, and inſtead of delivering us out of our ſtraits, plunge us in greater, and thoſe much more uncomfortable ones, becauſe then we want that which is the only ſupport, Gods favour and aid, which we certainly forfeit, when we thus ſeek to reſcue our ſelves by any ſinful means. But ſuppoſing we could by ſuch a way certainly free our ſelves from the preſent danger; yet alas, we are far from having gained ſafety by it; we have only removed the danger from that which was leſs conſiderable, and brought it upon the moſt precious part of us, our Souls; like an unskilful Phyſician, that to remove a pain from the finger ſtrikes it to the heart; we are therefore groſly miſtaken, when we think we have played the good Husband in ſaving our Liberties or eſtates, or lives themſelves by a ſin; we have not ſaved them, but madly overbought them, laid out our very Souls on them: And Chriſt tells us how little we ſhall gain by ſuch bargains, *Mat.* 16. 26. *What is a man profited if he ſhall gain the whole world and loſe his own ſoul?* Let us therefore reſolve never to value any thing we can poſſeſs in this world at ſo high a rate, as to keep it at the price of the leaſt ſin; but whenever things are driven to ſuch an iſſue, that we muſt either part with ſome, perhaps all our worldly poſſeſſions, nay life it ſelf, or elſe commit ſin, let us then remember, that this is the ſeaſon for us to perform that great and excellent duty of *taking up the Croſs*, which we can never ſo properly do as in this caſe; for our bearing of that which we have no poſſible way of avoiding, can at moſt be ſaid to be but the carrying of the Croſs, but then only can we be ſaid to take it up, when having a means of eſcaping it by a ſin, we rather chuſe to endure the Croſs than commit the Sin; for then it is not laid on us by any unavoidable neceſſity, but we willingly chuſe it; and this is highly acceptable with God, yea, withal ſo ſtrictly required by him, that if we fail of performing it, when we are put to the trial, we are not to be accounted followers of Chriſt, for ſo himſelf hath expreſly told us, *Mat.* 16. 24. *If any man come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me*; and ſo again, *Mark* 8. 34. It were therefore a good point of Spiritual wiſdom for us, ſometimes by ſome lower degrees of ſelf-denial, to fit our ſelves for this greater, when we ſhall be called to it; we know he that expects to run a Race will beforehand be often breathing himſelf, that he may not be foil'd when he comes to run for the prize; in like manner 'twill be fit for us, ſometimes to abridge our ſelves ſomewhat of our lawful pleaſure, or eaſe, or profit, ſo that we may get ſuch a maſtery over our ſelves, as to be able to renounce all when our obedience to God requires it.

Not ſeek to deliver our ſelves by any Sin.

53. And as we are thus to truſt on God for deliverance from danger, ſo are we likewiſe for ſupply of our wants; and thoſe again are either Spiritual or Temporal: Our Spiritual want is that of his Grace to enable us to ſerve him, without which we can do nothing: And for this we are to depend on him, provided, we neglect not the means, which are Prayer and a careful uſing of what he hath already beſtowed on us: For then we have his pro-

In all wants ſpiritual.

miſe for it, *He will give the holy Spirit to them that ask it*, Luke 11. 15. and *unto him that hath ſhall be given*, Matth 25. 29. that is, *To him that hath made a good uſe of that grace he hath already, God will give more.* We are not therefore to affright our ſelves with the difficulty of thoſe things God requires of us, but remember he commands nothing which he will not enable us to perform, if we be not wanting to our ſelves. And therefore let us ſincerely do our parts, and confidently aſſure our ſelves God will not fail of his.

Temporal wants. 54. But we have likewiſe Temporal and Bodily wants, and for the ſupply of them we are likewiſe to rely on him. And for this alſo we want no Promiſes, ſuppoſing us to be of the number of them to whom they are made, that is, Gods faithful Servants: *They that fear the Lord lack nothing*, Pſal. 34. 9. and ver. 10. *They that ſeek the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good:* Again Pſal. 33. 18, 19. *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their ſouls from death, and to feed them in time of famine.* Examples alſo we have of this, as we may ſee in the caſe of *Elijah*, and the *poor widow*, 1 *Kings* 17. and many others.

55. We are therefore to look up to him for the proviſion of all things neceſſary for us, according to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, *The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon.* And our Saviour hath taught us to pray for our *daily bread*; thereby teaching us that we are to live in continual dependance upon God for it. Yet I mean not by this, that we ſhould ſo expect it from God, as to give up our ſelves to idleneſs and expect to be fed by Miracles. No, our honeſt induſtry and labour is the means by which God ordinarily gives us the neceſſaries of this life; and therefore we muſt by no means neglect that, *He that will not labour, let him not eat*, ſays the Apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 10. And we may believe God will pronounce the ſame ſentence, and ſuffer the ſlothful perſon to want even neceſſary food. But when we have faithfully uſed our own endeavour, then we muſt alſo look up to God for his bleſſing on it, without which it can never proſper to us. And having done thus, we may comfortably reſt our ſelves on his Providence for ſuch a meaſure of theſe outward things as he ſees fitteſt for us.

56. But if our condition be ſuch that we are not able to labour, and have no other means of bringing in the neceſſaries of life to our ſelves, yet even then we are chearfully to reſt upon God, believing that he who feeds the Ravens, will by ſome means or other, though we know not what, provide for us, ſo long as he pleaſes we ſhall continue in this world, and never in any caſe torment our ſelves with carking and diſtruſtful thoughts, but as the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Caſt all our care on him who careth for us.*

57. This is earneſtly preſt by our Saviour, *Matt.* 6. where he abundantly ſhews the folly of this ſin of diſtruſt. The place is a moſt excellent one, and therefore I ſhall ſet it down at large, Verſe 25. *Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink; neither for your body what you ſhall put on; Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold, the Fowls of the Air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his ſtature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Conſider the Lilies of the Field how they grow, they toil not, neither do they ſpin, and yet I ſay unto you, that even* Solomon *in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe. Wherefore*

if

if God ſo cloath the graſs of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little Faith? Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat? Or what ſhall we drink? Or wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed? (for after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things. But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and then all theſe things ſhall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for to morrow, for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of it ſelf; ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. I might add many other texts to this purpoſe, but this is ſo full and convincing, that I ſuppoſe it needleſs.

58. All therefore that I ſhall ſay more concerning this duty is to put you in mind of the great benefits of it; as firſt, that by this truſting upon God, you engage and bind him to provide for you. Men, you know, think themſelves highly concern'd not to fail thoſe that depend and truſt upon them; and certainly God doth ſo much more. But then ſecondly, there is a great deal of eaſe and quiet in the practice of this duty, it delivers us from all thoſe carkings and immoderate cares which diſquiet our minds, break our ſleep, and gnaw even our very heart. I doubt not but thoſe that have felt them, need not be told they are uneaſie, but then methinks that uneaſineſs ſhould make us forward to embrace the means for the removing of them, and ſo we ſee it too often doth in unlawful ones; men will cheat, and ſteal, and lie, and do any thing to deliver themſelves from the fear of want. But alas they commonly prove but deceitful remedies; they bring Gods curſe on us, and ſo are more likely to betray us to want, than to keep us from it. But if you deſire a certain and unfailing cure for cares; take this of relying upon God. *The benefits of truſting on God.*

59. For what ſhould cauſe that man to fear want that knows he hath one that cares for him, who is All-ſufficient, and will not ſuffer him to want what is fit for him? If a poor man had but a faithful promiſe from a wealthy perſon that he would never ſuffer him to want, it is ſure he would be highly cheered with it, and would not then think fit to be as carking as he was before: and yet a mans promiſe may fail us, he may either grow poor and not be able, or he may prove falſe and not be willing to make good his word. But we know, God is ſubject neither to impoveriſhing nor deceit. And therefore how vile an injury do we offer to him, if we dare not truſt as much upon his promiſe as we would that of a man? Yea, and how great a miſchief do we do our ſelves by loading our minds with a multitude of vexatious and tormenting cares, when we may ſo ſecurely *caſt our burden upon God?* I conclude this in the words of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known to God.*

SUNDAY II.

Of Humility, of Submiſſion to Gods Will, in reſpect of Obedience; of Patience in all ſorts of ſufferings, and of Honour due to God in ſeveral ways, in his Houſe, Poſſeſſion, his Day, Word, Sacraments, &c.

Sect. 1. A SIXTH Duty to God is HUMILITY, that is, ſuch a ſenſe of our own meanneſs and his excellency, as may work in us lowly and unfeigned ſubmiſſion to him: This ſubmiſſion is twofold; firſt, to his Will, ſecondly, to his Wiſdom. *Humility.*

2. The

Submiſſion to Gods will in reſpect of obedience.

2. The ſubmiſſion to his Will is alſo of two ſorts, the ſubmiſſion either of obedience, or patience; that of obedience is our ready yielding our ſelves up to do his Will, ſo that when God hath by his command made known to us what his pleaſure is, chearfully and readily to ſet about it. To enable us to this, humility is exceeding neceſſary; for a proud perſon is of all others the unapteſt to obey, and we ſee men never pay an obedience but where they acknowledge the perſon commanding to be ſome way above them, and ſo it is here. If we be not throughly perſwaded that God is infinitely above us, that we are vileneſs and nothing in compariſon of him, we ſhall never pay our due obedience.

The great diſtance between God and us.

3. Therefore if ever you mean to obey intirely (as you muſt if ever you mean to be ſaved) get your hearts poſſeſt with the ſenſe of that great unſpeakable diſtance that is between God and you. Conſider him as he is a God of infinite Majeſty and glory; and we poor worms of the Earth; He infinite in power able to do all things, and we able to do nothing, not ſo much as to make one *hair white or black*, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *Matt.* 5. 36. He of infinite purity and holineſs, and we polluted and defiled, wallowing in all kind of ſins and uncleanneſs; he unchangeable and conſtant, and we ſubject to change and alteration every minute of our lives; He Eternal and Immortal, and we frail mortals, that whenever he *taketh away our breath we die, and are turned again to our duſt*, *Pſalm* 104. 29. Conſider all this, I ſay, and you cannot but acknowledge a wide difference between God and man, and therefore may well cry out with *Job*, after he had approacht ſo near to God, as to diſcern ſomewhat of his excellency, *Job* 42. 56. *Now mine eye ſeeth thee, wherefore I abhor my ſelf and repent in duſt and aſhes.*

The unworthineſs of our beſt works.

4. And even when this Humility hath brought us to obedience, it is not then to be caſt off, as if we had no further uſe of it; for there is ſtill great uſe, nay neceſſity of it, to keep us from any high conceits of our performances, which if we once entertain, it will blaſt the beſt of them, and make them utterly unacceptable to God; like the ſtrictneſs of the *Phariſee*, which when once he came to boaſt of, the *Publican* was preferred before him, *Luke* 18. The beſt of our works are ſo full of infirmity and pollution, that if we compare them with that perfection and purity which is in God, we may truly ſay with the *Prophet*, *All our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags*, *Iſaiah* 64. 6. and therefore to pride our ſelves in them, is the ſame madneſs, that it would be in a beggar to brag of his apparel, when it is nothing but vile rags and tatters. Our Saviours precept in this matter muſt always be remembred, *Luke* 17. 10. *When you have done all thoſe things, which are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants*; if when we have done all, we muſt give our ſelves no better a title, what are we then to eſteem our ſelves, that are ſo far from doing any conſiderable part of what we are commanded? Surely that worſer name of *ſlothful* and *wicked ſervant*, *Matt.* 25. 26. we have no reaſon to think too bad for us.

Submiſſion in reſpect of Patience.

5. A ſecond ſort of Submiſſion to his Will, is that of Patience; this ſtands in ſuffering his will, as that of obedience did in acting it, and is nothing elſe, but a willing and quiet yielding to whatever afflictions it pleaſes God to lay upon us. This the forementioned humility will make eaſie to us, for when our hearts are throughly poſſeſt with that reverence and eſteem of God, it will be impoſſible for us to grudge or murmur at whatever he does. We ſee an inſtance of it in Old *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 3. who after he had heard the ſad threatnings of God againſt him, of the deſtruction of his family, the loſs of the Prieſthood, the cutting off both his ſons in one day,

which

which were all of them afflictions of the heavieſt kind, yet this one conſideration, that it was the Lord, enabled him calmly and quietly to yield to them; ſaying, *Let him do what ſeemeth him good*, Verſe 18. The ſame effect it had on *David*, in his ſuffering, *Pſal. 39. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth becauſe thou didſt it.* God's doing it ſilenced all murmurings and grumblings in him. And ſo muſt it do in us, in all our afflictions, if we will indeed approve our humility to God.

6. For ſurely you will not think that child hath due humility to his Parent, or that ſervant to his Maſter, that when they are corrected, ſhall flie in the Fathers or Maſters face. But this do we whenever we grudge and repine at that which God lays upon us. But beſides the want of Humility in our ſo doing, there is alſo a great want of juſtice in it; for God hath, as we are his creatures, a Right to do with us what he will, and therefore for us to reſiſt that right of his, is the higheſt injuſtice that can be; nay, farther it is alſo the greateſt folly in the world, for it is only our good that God aims at in afflicting us; that heavenly Father is not like our earthly ones, who ſometime correct their children only to ſatisfie their own angry humour, not to do them good. But this is ſubject to no ſuch frailties, *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, Lam.3.33.* They are our ſins, which do not only give him juſt cauſe, but even force and neceſſitate him to puniſh us. He carries to us the bowels and affections of the tendereſt Father: Now when a father ſees his child ſtubborn and rebellious, and running on in a courſe that will certainly undo him, what greater act of Fatherly kindneſs can he do than chaſten and correct him, to ſee if by that means he may amend him? nay indeed he could not be ſaid to have true kindneſs to him if he ſhould not. And thus it is with God when he ſees us run on in ſin, either he muſt leave off to love us, and ſo leave us to our ſelves to take our own courſe, and that is the heavieſt curſe that can befal any man; or elſe if he continue to love us, he muſt correct and puniſh us to bring us to amendment. Therefore whenever he ſtrikes, we are in all reaſon, not only patiently to lie under his rod, but (as I may ſay) kiſs it alſo; that is, be very thankful to him, that he is pleaſed not to *give us over to our own hearts luſts, Pſal.* 18. 12. But ſtill continues his care of us; ſends afflictions, as ſo many meſſengers to call us home to himſelf. You ſee then how groſs a folly it is to murmur at thoſe ſtripes which are meant ſo graciouſly; it is like that of a froward Patient, which reproaches and reviles the Phyſician that comes to cure him, and if ſuch a one be left to die of his diſeaſe, every one knows whom he is to thank for it.

Thankfulneſs for Gods corrections.

7. But it is not only quietneſs, no nor thankfulneſs neither under afflictions, that is the full of our Duty in this matter; we muſt have fruitfulneſs alſo, or all the reſt will ſtand us in no ſtead. By fruitfulneſs I mean the bringing forth that, which the afflictions were ſent to work in us; *viz.* the amendment of our lives. To which purpoſe in time of affliction it is very neceſſary for us to call our ſelves to an account, to examine our hearts and lives, and ſearch diligently what Sins lie upon us, which provoked God thus to ſmite us, and whatſoever we find our ſelves guilty of, humbly to confeſs to God, and immediately to forſake for the reſt of our time.

Fruitfulneſs under them.

8. All I ſhall add concerning this duty of patience, is, that we are as much bound to it in one ſort of ſufferings, as another, whether our ſufferings be ſo immediately from Gods hand, that no creature hath any thing to do in it, as ſickneſs, or the like; or whether it be ſuch, wherein men are the inſtruments of afflicting us. For it is moſt ſure when any man doth

In all ſorts of ſufferings.

doth us hurt, he could not do it without Gods permiſſion and ſufferance, and God may as well make them the inſtruments of puniſhing us, as do it more directly by himſelf; and it is but a counterfeit patience, that pretends to ſubmit to God, and yet can bear nothing from men; we ſee holy *Job*, who is ſet forth to us as a pattern of true patience, made no ſuch difference in his afflictions; he took the loſs of his Cattel, which the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* robb'd him of, with the very ſame meekneſs with which he did that which was conſumed by fire from Heaven. When therefore we ſuffer any thing from men, be it never ſo unjuſtly in reſpect of them, we are yet to confeſs it is moſt juſt in reſpect of God, and therefore inſtead of looking upon them with rage and revenge, as the common cuſtom of the world is, we are to look up to God, acknowledge his Juſtice in the affliction, begging his pardon moſt earneſtly for thoſe ſins, which have provoked him to ſend it, and patiently and thankfully bear it, till he ſhall ſee fit to remove it; ſtill ſaying with *Job*, *Bleſſed be the name of the Lord.*

Submiſſion to Gods wiſdom.

9. But I told you Humility contained in it a ſubmiſſion not only to his Will, but alſo to his Wiſdom; that is, to acknowledge him infinitely Wiſe, and therefore that whatever he doth, is beſt and fitteſt to be done. And this we are to confeſs both in his commands, and in his diſpoſing and ordering of things: Firſt, whatſoever he commands us either to believe or do, we are to ſubmit to his Wiſdom in both, to believe whatſoever he bids us believe, how impoſſible ſoever it ſeems to our ſhallow underſtandings, and to do whatever he commands us to do, how contrary ſoever it be to our fleſhly Reaſon or humour, and in both to conclude, that his Commands are moſt fit and reaſonable however they appear to us.

In his commands.

In his diſpoſals.

10. Secondly, We are to ſubmit to his Wiſdom in reſpect of his Diſpoſal and ordering of things; to acknowledge he diſpoſes all things moſt Wiſely, and that not only in what concerns the world in general; but alſo in what concerns every one of us in particular; ſo that in what condition ſoever he puts us, we are to aſſure our ſelves it is that which is beſt for us, ſince he chuſes it for us who cannot erre. And therefore never to have impatient deſires of any thing in this world, but to leave it to God to fit us with ſuch an eſtate and condition as he ſees beſt for us, and there let us quietly and contentedly reſt; yea, though it be ſuch as of all others we ſhould leaſt have wiſh'd for our ſelves. And this ſurely cannot but appear very reaſonable to any that hath humility; for that having taught him, that God is infinitely wiſe, and he very fooliſh, he can never doubt but that it is much more for his good that God ſhould chuſe for him than he for himſelf; even as it is much more for the childs good to have the Parent chuſe for it, than to be left to thoſe ſilly choices it would make for it ſelf. For how many times would it cut, and burn, and miſchief it ſelf if it might have every thing it deſires! And ſuch children are we, we many times eagerly deſire thoſe things which would undo us if we had them. Thus many times we wiſh for Wealth, and Honour, and Beauty, and the like, when if we had them they would only prove ſnares to us, we ſhould be drawn into ſin by them. And this God, who knows all things, ſees, though we do not, and therefore often denies us thoſe things which he ſees will tend to our miſchief, and it is his abundant mercy that he doth ſo. Let us therefore when ever we are diſappointed of any of our aims and wiſhes, not only patiently but joyfully ſubmit to it, as knowing that it is certainly beſt for us, it being choſen by the unerring wiſdom of our heavenly Father.

11. A ſeventh Duty to God is HONOUR, that is, the paying him ſuch a reverence and reſpect as belongs to ſo great a Majeſty. And this is either inward or outward. The inward is the exalting him in our hearts, having always the higheſt and moſt excellent eſteem of him. The outward is the manifeſting and ſhewing forth that inward; and that is the firſt general in the whole courſe of our lives, the living like men that do indeed carry that high eſteem of God. Now you know if we bear any ſpecial Reverence but to a man, we will be careful not to do any foul or baſe thing in his preſence, and ſo if we do indeed honour God, we ſhall abhor to do any unworthy thing in his ſight. But God ſees all things, and therefore there is no way to ſhun the doing it in his ſight if we do it at all; therefore if we do thus reverence him, we muſt never at any time do any ſinful thing. *Honour.*

12. But beſides this general way of honouring God, there are many particular acts by which we may honour him, and theſe acts are divers according to the ſeveral particulars about which they are exerciſed. For we are to pay this honour not only immediately to himſelf, but alſo by a due eſtimation and account of all thoſe things that nearly relate or belong to him. Thoſe are eſpecially ſix; firſt, his Houſe; ſecondly, his Revenue or income (as I may ſay) thirdly, his Day, fourthly, his Word, fifthly, his Sacraments, and ſixthly, his Name; and every one of theſe is to have ſome degree of our Reverence and eſteem. *Several ways of honouring God.*

13. Firſt, his Houſe, that is, the Church, which being the place ſet apart for his publick worſhip, we are to look on it, though not as holy in reſpect of it ſelf, yet in reſpect of its uſe, and therefore muſt not profane it by employing it to uſes of our own. This Chriſt hath taught us by that act of his, *Mat.* 21. 12. in driving the buyers and ſellers out of the Temple, ſaying, *My houſe is called the houſe of Prayer:* And again, *John* 2. 16. *Make not my Fathers houſe a houſe of Merchandize.* By which it is clear, Churches are to be uſed only for the ſervices of God, and we are to make that the only end of our coming thither, and not to come to Church as to a Market to make bargains or diſpatch buſineſſes with our neighbours, as is too common among many. But whenever thou entreſt the Church, remember that it is the Houſe of God, a place where he is in an eſpecial manner preſent, and therefore take the counſel of the wiſe man, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. and *keep thy foot when thou goeſt into the houſe of God*; that is, behave thy ſelf with that godly awe and reverence which belongs to that great Majeſty thou art before. Remember that thy buſineſs there is to converſe with God, and therefore ſhut out all thoughts of the world, even of thy moſt lawful buſineſs, which though they be allowable at another time, are here ſinful. How fearful a guilt is it then to entertain any ſuch thoughts as are in themſelves wicked? It is like the treaſon of *Judas*, who pretended indeed to come to kiſs his Maſter, but brought with him a band of Souldiers to apprehend him, *Matth.* 26. We make ſhew in our coming to Church of ſerving and worſhipping God, but we bring with us a train of his enemies to provoke and deſpite him. This is a wickedneſs that may outvie the profaneneſs of theſe days, in turning Churches into Stables; for ſinful and polluted thoughts are much the worſe ſort of beaſts. *In his Houſe.*

14. The ſecond thing to which reſpect belongs, is his Revenue or Income; that is, whatſoever is his peculiar poſſeſſions, ſet apart for the maintenance of thoſe that attend his Service; thoſe were the Prieſts in time of the Law, and Miniſters of the Goſpel now with us. And whatever is *His poſſeſſions.*

thus set apart, we must look on with such respect as not to dare to turn it to any other use. Of this sort some are the free-will offerings of men, who have sometimes of their own accord given some of their Goods or Land to this Holy use; and whatsoever is so given, can neither by the person that gave, nor any other be taken away, without that great sin of Sacriledge.

15. But besides these, there was among the *Jews*, and hath always been in all Christian Nations, something allotted by the Law of the Nation for the support and maintenance of those that attend the service of God. And it is but just and necessary it should be so, that those who by undertaking that Calling are taken off from the ways of gaining a livelihood in the world, should be provided for by them whose Souls they watch over. And therefore it is most reasonable, which the Apostle urges in this matter, 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?* That is, it is most unreasonable for men to grudge the bestowing a few carnal things, the outward necessaries of this temporal life, on them from whom they receive spiritual things, even instruction and assistance towards the obtaining of an eternal life.

The great sin of Sacriledge.

16. Now whatsoever is thus appointed for this use, may by no means be employed to any other. And therefore those Tithes which are here by Law allotted for the maintenance of the Ministery must by no means be kept back, nor any tricks or shifts used to avoid the payment either in whole or in part. For first, it is certain, that it is as truly theft as any other robbery can be, Ministers having right to their Tithes by the same Law, which gives any other man right to his estate. But then secondly, it is another manner of robbery than we think of, it is a robbing of God, whose Service they were given to maintain: And that you may not doubt the truth of this, it is no more than God himself hath said of it, *Mal.* 3. 8. *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me; yet ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In Tithes and Offerings.* Here it is most plain that in Gods account the withholding Tithes is a robbing of him. And if you please you may in the next verse see what the gain of this robbery amounts to, *ye are cursed with a curse.* A curse is all is gotten by it; and common experience shews us, that GODS vengeance doth in a remarkable manner pursue this sin of Sacriledge, whether it be that of withholding Tithes, or the other of seizing on those possessions, which have been voluntarily consecrated to God. Men think to enrich themselves by it, but it usually proves directly contrary; this unlawful gain becomes such a Canker in the estate, as often eats out even that we had a just title to. And therefore if you love (I will not say your Souls but) your estates, preserve them from that danger by a strict care never to meddle with any thing set apart for God.

The punishment.

The Times for his service.

17. A Third thing, wherein we are to express our Reverence to God, is the hallowing of the Times set apart for his Service. He who hath given all our time, requires some part of it to be paid back again, as a rent or tribute of the whole. Thus the *Jews* kept holy the seventh day, and we Christians the Sunday or Lords day; the *Jews* were in their Sabbath especially to remember the Creation of the world, and we in ours, the Resurrection of Christ, by which a way is made for us into that better world we expect hereafter. Now this day thus set apart, is to be employed in the Worship and Service of God, and that first more solemnly and publickly in the Congregation, from which no man must then absent himself without a just cause: And secondly, privately at home in praying with, and instructing our Families, or else in the yet more private duties of the closet;

Lords day.

closet; a mans own private Prayers, Reading, Meditation, and the like.

And that we may be at leisure for these, a Rest from all worldly business is commanded; therefore let no man think that a bare rest from labour is all that is required of him on the Lords day, but the time which he saves from the works of his calling, he is to lay out on those spiritual duties. For the Lords Day was never ordained to give us a pretence for idleness, but only to change our imployment from worldly to heavenly, much less was it meant that by our rest from our callings we should have more time free to bestow upon our sins, as too many do, who are more constant on that day at the Alehouse than the Church. But this Rest was commanded, first to shadow out to us that Rest from sin which we are bound to all the days of our lives. And secondly, to take us off from our worldly business, and to give us time to attend the service of God, and the need of our Souls.

18. And surely if we rightly consider it, it is a very great benefit to us that there is such a set time thus weekly returning for that purpose. We are very intent and busie upon the world, and if there were not some such time appointed to our hands, it is to be doubted we should hardly allot any our selves: And then what a starved condition must these poor Souls of ours be in, that shall never be afforded a meal? Whereas now there is a constant diet provided for them; every Sunday, if we will conscionably employ it, may be a festival day to them, may bring them in such spiritual food, as may nourish them to eternal life. We are not to look on this day with grudging, like those in *Amos* 8. 5. who ask, *When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may set forth wheat?* As if that time were utterly lost which were taken from our worldly business. But we are to consider it, as the gainfullest, as the joyfullest day of the week, a day of harvest, wherein we are to lay up in store for the whole week, nay for our whole lives.

19. But besides this of the weekly Lords day, there are other times which the Church hath set apart for the remembrance of some special mercies of God, such as the Birth and Resurrection of Christ, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the like, and these days we are to keep in that manner which the Church hath ordered, to wit, in the solemn worship of God, and in particular thanksgiving for that special blessing we then remember. And surely whoever is truly thankful for those rich mercies, cannot think it too much to set apart some few days in a year for that purpose. *The Feasts of the Church.*

But then we are to look that our Feasts be truly spiritual, by imploying the Day thus holily, and not make it an occasion of intemperance and disorder, as too many, who consider nothing in Christmas and other good times, but the good cheer and jollity of them. For that is doing despight instead of honour to Christ, who came to bring all purity and soberness into the world; and therefore must not have that coming of his remembred in any other manner.

20. Other days there are also set apart in memory of the Apostles and other Saints, wherein we are to give hearty thanks to God, for his graces in them; particularly, that they were made instruments of revealing to us Christ *Jesus*, and the way of Salvation, as you know the Apostles were by their Preaching throughout the world. And then farther, we are to meditate on those Examples of holy life they have given us, and stir up our selves to the imitation thereof. And whoever does uprightly set himself to make these uses of these several Holy-days, will have cause by the benefit he shall find from them, to thank, and not to blame the Church for ordering them.

The Faſts. 21. Another ſort of days there are, which we are likewiſe to obſerve, and thoſe are days of Faſting and Humiliation; and whatever of this kind the Church enjoyns, whether conſtantly at ſet times of the year, or upon any ſpecial and more ſudden occaſion, we are to obſerve in ſuch manner as ſhe directs; that is, not only a bare abſtaining from meat, which is only the bodies puniſhment; but in afflicting our Souls, humbling them deeply before God, in a hearty confeſſing, and bewailing of our own, and the Nations ſins, and earneſt prayer for Gods pardon and forgiveneſs, and for the turning away of thoſe judgments which thoſe ſins have called for: But above all, in *turning our ſelves from our ſins, looſing the bands of wickedneſs*, as *Iſaiah* ſpeaks, Chap. 58. 6. and exerciſing our ſelves in works of mercy, *dealing our bread to the hungry*, and the like, as it there follows.

Gods word. 22. Fourthly, We are to expreſs our Reverence to God, by honouring his Word; and this we muſt certainly do if we do indeed honour him, there being no ſurer ſign of our deſpiſing any perſon, than the ſetting light by what he ſays to us; as on the contrary, if we value one, every word he ſpeaks will be of weight with us. Now this Word of God is expreſly contained in the holy Scriptures, the Old and New Teſtament, where he ſpeaks to us to ſhew us his Will and our duty. And therefore to this word of his, we are to bear a wonderful reſpect, to look upon it, as the rule by which we muſt frame all the actions of our life; and to that end to ſtudy it much, to read in it as often as we can, if it may be, never to let a day paſs us without reading or hearing ſome part of it read.

The holy Scriptures.

23. But then that is not all: We muſt not only read, but we muſt mark what we read, we muſt diligently obſerve, what Duties there are which God commands us to perform, what faults they are, which God there charges us not to commit, together with the rewards promiſed to the one, and the puniſhment threatned to the other. When we have thus marked, we muſt lay them up in our memory; not ſo looſely and careleſly that they ſhall preſently drop out again; but we muſt ſo faſten them there by often thinking and meditating on them, that we may have them ready for our uſe. Now that uſe is the directing of our lives; and therefore whenever we are tempted to the committing of any evil, we are then to call to mind, This is the thing which in ſuch a Scripture is forbidden by God, and all his vengeances threatned againſt it; and ſo in like manner when any opportunity is offered us of doing good, to remember, This is the duty which I was exhorted to in ſuch a Scripture, and ſuch glorious rewards promiſed to the doing of it; and by theſe conſiderations ſtrengthen our ſelves for reſiſtance of the evil and performance of the good.

24. But beſides this of the written Word, it hath pleaſed God to provide yet farther for our inſtruction by his Miniſters, whoſe office it is to teach us Gods Will, not by ſaying any thing contrary to the written Word (for whatſoever is ſo, can never be Gods Will) but by explaining it, and making it eaſier to our underſtandings, and then applying it to our particular occaſions, and exhorting and ſtirring us up to the practice of it; all which is the end at which firſt their Catechizing and then their Preaching aimeth. And to this we are to bear alſo a due reſpect by giving diligent heed thereto, not only being preſent at Catechizings and Sermons, and either ſleep out the time, or think of ſomewhat elſe, but carefully marking what is ſaid to us. And ſurely if we did but rightly conſider, how much it concerns us, we ſhould conclude it very reaſonable for us to do ſo.

Catechizing. 25. For firſt, as to that of Catechizing, it is the laying the foundation upon which all Chriſtian practice muſt be built; for that is the teaching

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us our duty, without which it is impoſſible for us to perform it. And though it is true, that the Scriptures are the Fountains, from whence this knowledge of duty muſt be fetch'd, yet there are many who are not able to draw it from this Fountain themſelves, and therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary it ſhould be thus brought to them by others.

26. This Catechizing is generally lookt on as a thing belonging only to the youth, and ſo indeed it ought, not becauſe the oldeſt are not to learn, if they be ignorant, but becauſe all children ſhould be ſo inſtructed, that it ſhould be impoſſible for them to be ignorant when they come to years. And it nearly concerns every Parent, as they will free themſelves from the guilt of their Childrens eternal undoing, that they be careful to ſee them inſtructed in all neceſſary things; to which purpoſe it will be fit early to teach them ſome ſhort Catechiſm, of which ſort none ſo fit as the Church Catechiſm; yet are they not to reſt on theſe endeavours of their own, but alſo to call in the Miniſters help, that he may build them up farther in Chriſtian knowledge.

27. But alas! It is too ſure that Parents have very much neglected this Duty, and by that means it is that ſuch multitudes of men and women that are called Chriſtians, know no more of Chriſt, or any thing that concerns their own Souls, than the meereſt Heathen.

28. But although it were their Parents fault that they were not inſtructed when they were young, yet it is now their own, if they remain ſtill ignorant; and it is ſure it will be their own ruine and miſery if they wilfully continue ſo. Therefore whoever it be, of what age or condition ſoever, that is in this ignorant eſtate, or in any ſuch degree of it, that he wants any part of neceſſary ſaving knowledge, let him as he loves his Soul, as ever he would eſcape eternal damnation ſeek out for inſtruction, and let no fear of ſhame keep any from it: For firſt it is certain the ſhame belongs only to the wilful continuing in ignorance, to which the deſire of learning is directly contrary, and is ſo far from a ſhameful, that it is a moſt commendable thing, and will be ſure to be ſo accounted by all wiſe and good men. But ſecondly, ſuppoſe ſome profane, ſenſeleſs people ſhould deride it, yet ſure that ſhame were in all reaſon to be undergone joyfully, rather than venture on that confuſion of face which will at the day of Judgment befal thoſe who to avoid a little falſe ſhame amongſt men, have gone on in a wilful ignorance of their duty, which ignorance will be ſo far from excuſing any ſins they ſhall commit, that it adds one great and heavy ſin to all the reſt, even the deſpiſing that knowledge which is offered to them. How hainous a ſin that is, you may learn in the firſt Chapter of the *Proverbs*; where *hating knowledge*, verſe 29. is ſaid to be the thing that draws down thoſe ſad vengeances forementioned, even Gods forſaking men, laughing at their calamity inſtead of helping them: Which is of all other conditions in the world the moſt miſerable; and ſurely they are madly deſperate that will run themſelves into it.

29. As for thoſe who have already this foundation laid by the knowledge of the grounds of Chriſtian Religion, there is yet for them a farther help provided by Preaching. And it is no more than needs, for, God knows, thoſe that underſtand their duty well enough are too apt to forget it; nay, ſometimes by the violence of their own luſts to tranſgreſs it even when they do remember it, and therefore it is very uſeful we ſhould be put in mind of it to prevent our forgetting, and alſo often exhorted and aſſiſted to withſtand thoſe luſts which draw us to thoſe tranſgreſſions. And to theſe purpoſes preaching is intended, firſt, to warn us to be upon *Preaching.*

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our guard againſt our ſpiritual enemy, and then to furniſh us with weapons for the fight; that is, ſuch means and helps as may beſt enable us to beat off temptations and get the victory over them.

30. Since therefore this is the end of Preaching, we muſt not think we have done our duty when we have heard a Sermon, though never ſo attentively, but we muſt lay up in our hearts thoſe inſtructions and advices we there meet with, and uſe them faithfully to that end of overcoming our ſins. Therefore whenever thou comeſt to the Phyſician of thy Soul, do as thou wouldſt with the Phyſician of thy Body; thou comeſt to him not only to hear him talk and tell thee what will cure thee, but alſo to do according to his directions; and if thou doſt not ſo here, thou art as vain as he that expects a bare receipt from his Doctor ſhall cure him, though he never make uſe of it. Nay, thou art much more vain and ridiculous, for that, though it do him no good, will do him no harm, he ſhall never be the worſe for having been taught a medicine, though he uſe it not: But in theſe Spiritual Receipts it is otherwiſe; if we uſe them not to our good, they will do us a great deal of harm, they will riſe up in Judgment againſt us, and make our condemnation ſo much the heavier. Beware therefore not to bring that danger upon thy ſelf, but when thou haſt heard a Sermon, conſider with thy ſelf what directions there were in it for enabling thee to eſchew evil, or to do good. And if there were any thing eſpecially concern'd thine own boſom ſin, lay that cloſe to thy heart, and all the week after make it matter of meditation; think of it even whilſt thou art at thy work, if thou wanteſt other time; and not only think of it, but ſet to the practice of it, do what thou wert adviſed to, for the ſubduing ſins, and quickening grace in thee. Finally, look carefully to practiſe the counſel of the Apoſtle, *James* 1. 22. *Be ye doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving your own Souls.* To hope for good from the Word without doing it, is, it ſeems, nothing but a deceiving our ſelves: Let us never therefore meaſure our godlineſs by the number of Sermons which we hear, as if the hearing many were the certain mark of a good Chriſtian; but by the ſtore of fruit we bring forth by them, without which all our hearing will ſerve but to bring us into that heavier portion of ſtripes, which belongs to him that *knows his Maſters will and does it not, Luke* 12. 47. But this reverence which is due to Preaching we muſt not pay to all that is now adays called ſo, for God knows there are many *falſe Prophets gone out into the world*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *John* 4. 1. And now, if ever, is that advice of his neceſſary, *To try the ſpirits whether they be of God.* But what I have ſaid, I mean only of the Preaching of thoſe who firſt have a lawful calling to the Office, and ſecondly frame their doctrine according to the right rule, the written Word of God. But if any man ſay, he is not able to judge whether the Doctrine be according to the Word or no, let him at leaſt try it by the common known rules of duty which he doth underſtand, and if he find it a doctrine giving men liberty to commit thoſe things which are by all acknowledged ſins, ſuch as Rebellion, Injuſtice, unmercifulneſs, uncleanneſs, or the like, he may conclude, it is utterly contrary to God and his Word, and then abhorrence, and not reverence belongs to it.

The Sacraments. 31. Fifthly, We are to expreſs our honouring of God by reverencing his Sacraments: Thoſe are two, Baptiſm, and the Supper of the Lord. And this we are to do, Firſt by our high eſteem of them, ſecondly, by our reverent uſage of them; we are firſt to prize them at a high rate, looking on them, as the inſtruments of bringing to us the greateſt bleſ-

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ſings we can receive. The firſt of them, Baptiſm, that enters us into Covenant with God, makes us members of Chriſt, and ſo gives us right to all thoſe precious benefits that flow from him, to wit, pardon of ſins, ſanctifying grace, and Heaven it ſelf, on condition we perform our parts of the Covenant. And as for the Lords Supper, that is not only a ſign and remembrance of Chriſt and his Death; but it is actually the giving Chriſt, and all the fruits of his death to every worthy receiver; and therefore there is a moſt high eſtimation, and value due to each of them.

Of Baptiſm.

32. And not only ſo; but in the ſecond place we muſt ſhew our reverence in our uſage of them; and that, firſt, Before; ſecondly, At; thirdly, After the time of Receiving them. It is true that the Sacrament of Baptiſm being now adminiſtred to us, when we are Infants, it is not to be expected of us, that we ſhould in our own perſons do any thing, either before or at the time of receiving it: Thoſe performances were ſtrictly required of all perſons, who were Baptized when they were of years. But for us, it ſuffices to give us this right to Baptiſm, that we are born within the pale of the Church, that is, of Chriſtian Parents; and all that is required at that time is, what we can only perform by others, they in our ſtead promiſing that when we come to years we will perform our parts of the Covenant. But by how much the leſs we are then able to do ſo much, the greater bond lies on us to perform thoſe after-duties required of us, by which we are to ſupply the want of the former.

The vow of Baptiſm.

33. Now if you would know what thoſe duties are, look over thoſe promiſes which your Godfathers and Godmothers then made in your name, and you may then learn them. I cannot give you them in a better form than that of our Churches Catechiſm, which tells us, *That our Godfathers and Godmothers did promiſe and vow three things in our names*; firſt, *that we ſhould forſake the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh.* Where, by the Devil is meant, firſt, the worſhipping of all falſe gods, which is indeed but worſhipping the Devil: A ſin which at the time of Chriſts coming into the World was very common, moſt part of Mankind then living in that vile Idolatry. And therefore when Baptiſm was firſt ordained, it was but needful to make the forſaking of thoſe falſe gods a principal part of the vow. And though thoſe falſe worſhips are now much rarer, yet there was one ſpecial part of them, which may be feared to be yet too common among us, and that is all ſorts of uncleanneſs, which though we do not make Ceremonies of our Religion, as the Heathens did of theirs, yet the committing thereof is a moſt high provocation in Gods eyes, ſuch as drew him to deſtroy whole *Cities with fire and brimſtone*, as you may read, *Gen.* 19. Nay, the *whole world with water*, *Gen.* 6. and will not fail to bring down judgments, and ſtrange ones, on any that continue therein; and therefore the forſaking them well deſerves to be lookt on as an eſpecial part of this promiſe. Beſides this, all dealing with the Devil is here vowed againſt, whether it be by practiſing witchcraft our ſelves, or conſulting with thoſe that do, upon any occaſion whatever, as the recovery of our health, our goods, or whatever elſe; for this is a degree of the former ſin, it is the forſaking of the Lord, and ſetting up the Devil for our God, whilſt we go to him in our needs for help.

34. But we alſo renounce all the works of the Devil; and thoſe are either in general all thoſe that the Devil tempts us to, or elſe thoſe particular kinds of ſin which have moſt of his image on them; that is, thoſe which he himſelf moſt practiſes, ſuch are Pride (which brought him from being

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an Angel of light to the accurſed condition he is now in) and Lying; he is, as our Saviour ſaith, *John* 8. 44. *A Lyar, and the Father of it*; and ſuch alſo are Malice and Envy, eſpecially Killing and Deſtroying of others, for he was a *murderer from the beginning*, *John* 8. 44. But above all there is nothing wherein we become ſo like him, as in Tempting and drawing others to ſin, which is his whole trade and buſineſs, and if we make it any part of ours, we become like that *roaring Lion, that goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8.

35. The ſecond thing we Vow to forſake, is the *Pomps and vanities of this wicked world.* By the pomps and vanities there are ſeveral things meant; ſome of them ſuch as were uſed by the Heathens in ſome unlawful ſports of theirs, wherein we are not now ſo much concern'd, there being none of them remaining among us; but beſides that, there is meant all exceſs, either in diet, or ſports, or apparel, when we keep not thoſe due meaſures, which either by the general rules of ſobriety, or the particular circumſtances of our qualities and callings we are bound to. Next by the wicked world, we may underſtand, firſt, the wealth and greatneſs of the world, which though we do not ſo totally renounce, that it is unlawful for a Chriſtian to be either rich or Great, yet we thus far promiſe to forſake them, that we will not ſet our hearts upon them, nor either get or keep them by the leaſt unlawful means. Secondly, by the wicked world, we may underſtand the companies and cuſtoms of the world, which ſo far as they are wicked, we here renounce; that is, we promiſe never to be drawn by company to the commiſſion of a ſin, but rather to forſake the moſt delightful company than to be enſnared by it; nor yet by cuſtom, but rather venture the ſhame of being thought ſingular, ridiculous perſons, walk as it were in a path by our ſelves, than put our ſelves into that *broad way that leads to deſtruction*, by giving our ſelves over to any ſinful cuſtom how common ſoever it be grown. If this part of our vow were but throughly conſidered, it would arm us againſt moſt of the temptations the world offers us, company and cuſtom being the two ſpecial inſtruments by which it works on us.

36. A third thing we renounce, is all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh; where the fleſh is to be underſtood in that ſence wherein the Scripture often uſes it, for the fountain of all diſordered affections. For though thoſe unclean deſires which we ordinarily call the luſts of the fleſh are here meant, yet they are not the only things here contained, there being divers other things which the Scripture calls the *works of the fleſh*; I cannot better inform you of them than by ſetting down the liſt S. *Paul* gives of them, *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like.* This with thoſe other deſcriptions you will find ſcattered in ſeveral places of Scripture, will ſhew you there are many things contained in this part of your vow, the forſaking all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh.

37. The ſecond thing our Godfathers and Godmothers promiſed for us, was, that *we ſhould believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.* Theſe we have ſummed up together in that which we call the Apoſtles Creed, which ſince we promiſe to believe, we are ſuppoſed alſo to promiſe to learn them, and that not only the words, but likewiſe the plain ſence of them; for who can believe what he either never heard of, or knows not any thing of the meaning of it? Now by this believing is meant not only the conſenting to the truth of them, but alſo the living like them that do believe;

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As for example, our believing that God created us ſhould make us live in that ſubjection and obedience to him which becomes Creatures to their Creator; the believing that Chriſt Redeemed us, ſhould make us yield up our ſelves to him as his purchaſe, to be diſpoſed wholly by him and employed only in his ſervice. The believing a judgment to come ſhould give us care ſo to walk that we may not be condemned in it. And our believing the life everlaſting, ſhould make us diligent ſo to employ our ſhort moment of time here, that our everlaſting life may be a life of joy, not of miſery to us. In this manner from all the articles of the Creed, we are to draw motives to confirm us in all Chriſtian Practice, to which end it is that our learning and believing of them tends, and therefore without it we are very far from making good this part of our Vow, the *believing all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.*

38. The laſt part of our Vow is, that we *ſhould keep Gods holy will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of our lives.* Where by *our keeping Gods holy will and Commandments*, is meant our doing of all thoſe things, which he hath made known to us to be his will we ſhould perform; wherein he hath given us his holy word to inſtruct us, and teach us, what it is that he requires of us, and now he expects that we ſhould faithfully do it without favouring our ſelves in the breach of any one of his commands. And then in this entire obedience, we muſt walk *all the days of our lives*: that is, we muſt go on in a conſtant courſe of obeying God; not only fetch ſome few ſteps in his ways, but walk in them, and that not for ſome part of our time, but *all the days of our lives*, never turn out of them, but go on conſtantly in them, as long as we live in this world.

The ſtrict obligation of this Vow of Baptiſm.

39. Having now thus briefly explained to you this Vow made at your BAPTISM, all I ſhall add concerning it, is only to remember you how nearly you are concern'd in the keeping it: and that firſt in reſpect of juſtice, ſecondly, in reſpect of advantage and benefit. That you are in juſtice bound to it, I need ſay no more but that it is a promiſe, and you know juſtice requires of every man the keeping of his promiſe. But then this is of all other promiſes the moſt ſolemn and binding, for it is a Vow, that is, a promiſe made to God; and therefore we are not only unjuſt, but forſworn, whenever we break any part of it.

40. But ſecondly, we are alſo highly concerned to keep it, in reſpect of our own benefit. I told you before, that Baptiſm entred us into Covenant with God; now a Covenant is made up of two parts, that is, ſomething promiſed by the one party, and ſomething by the other of the parties that make the Covenant. And if one of them break his part of the Covenant, that is, perform not what he hath agreed to, he can in no reaſon look that the other ſhould make good his. And ſo it is here, God doth indeed promiſe thoſe benefits before mentioned, and that is his part of the Covenant. But then we alſo undertake to perform the ſeveral things contained in this Vow of Baptiſm, and that is our part of it, and unleſs we do indeed perform them, God is not tied to make good his, and ſo we forfeit all thoſe precious benefits and advantages, we are left in that natural and miſerable eſtate of ours, *children of wrath, enemies to God, and heirs of eternal damnation.* And now what can be the pleaſure that any or all ſins can afford us, that can make us the leaſt degree of recompence for ſuch a loſs, the loſs of Gods favour and grace here, and the loſs of our own Souls hereafter? For as our Saviour ſaith, *Mark* 8. 36. *What ſhall it profit a man if he ſhall gain the whole world and loſe his own ſoul?* Yet this mad bargain we make whenever we break any part of this our Vow of Baptiſm. It therefore

moſt nearly concerns us to conſider ſadly of it, to remember that every ſin we commit is a direct breach of this our Vow, and therefore when thou art tempted to any ſin, ſeem it never ſo light, ſay not of it as *Lot* did of *Zoar*, *Gen.* 19. 20. *Is it not a little one?* But conſider that whatever it is, thou haſt in thy Baptiſm vowed againſt it, and then be it never ſo little it draws a great one at the heels of it, no leſs than that of being forſworn, which whoever commits, God hath in the third Commandment pronounced, *He will not hold him guiltleſs.* And that we may the better keep this Vow, it will be very uſeful often to repeat to our ſelves the ſeveral branches of it, that ſo we may ſtill have it ready in our minds to ſet againſt all temptations; and ſurely it is ſo excellent a weapon, that if we do not either caſt it aſide, or uſe it very negligently, it will enable us by Gods help, to put to flight our ſpiritual adverſary. And this is that reverence we are to pay to this firſt Sacrament, that of Baptiſm.

SUNDAY III.

Of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, Of preparation before, as Examination; of Repentance, Faith, Obedience, of duties to be done at the Receiving and afterwards, &c.

The Lords Supper.

Sect. 1. NOW follows the Reverence due to the Sacrament of the LORDS SUPPER; and in this I muſt follow my firſt diviſion, and ſet down firſt, what is to be done Before; ſecondly, At; and thirdly, After the time of Receiving; for in this Sacrament we cannot be excuſed from any one of theſe, though in the former we are.

Things to be done before receiving.

Examination.

2. And firſt, for that which is to be done Before, S. *Paul* tells us it is Examination, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* But before I proceed to the particulars of this Examination, I muſt in the general tell you, that the ſpecial buſineſs we have to do in this Sacrament, is to repeat and renew that Covenant we made with God in our Baptiſm, which we having many ways grievouſly broken, it pleaſes God in his great mercy to ſuffer us to come to the renewing of it in this Sacrament, which if we do in ſincerity of heart, he hath promiſed to accept us, and to give us all thoſe benefits in this, which he was ready to beſtow in the other Sacrament, if we had not by our own fault forfeited them. Since then the renewing of our Covenant is our buſineſs at this time, it follows that theſe three things are neceſſary towards it: Firſt, that we underſtand what the Covenant is; Secondly, that we conſider what our Breaches of it have been; and thirdly, that we reſolve upon a ſtrict obſervance of it, for the reſt of our life. And the trying our ſelves in every one of theſe particulars is that examination which is required of us before we come to this Sacrament.

3. And firſt, we are to examine whether we underſtand what this Covenant is; this is exceeding neceſſary, as being the foundation of both the other, for it is neither poſſible to diſcover our paſt ſins, nor to ſettle purpoſes againſt them for the future without it. Let this therefore be your firſt buſineſs, Try whether you rightly underſtand what that Covenant is which you entred into at your Baptiſm, what be the mercies promiſed on Gods part, and the Duties on yours. And becauſe the Covenant made with each of us in Baptiſm is only the applying to our particulars the Covenant made by God in Chriſt with all mankind in general, you are to conſider whether you underſtand that; if you do not, you muſt immediately

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ſeek for inſtruction in it. And till you have means of gaining better, look over what is briefly ſaid in the entrance to this Treatiſe concerning the SECOND COVENANT, which is the foundation of that Covenant which God makes with us in our Baptiſm. And becauſe you will there find, that obedience to all Gods Commands is the condition required of us, and is alſo that which we expreſly Vow in our Baptiſm, it is neceſſary you ſhould likewiſe know what thoſe Commands of God are. Therefore if you find you are ignorant of them, never be at reſt till you have got your ſelf inſtructed in them, and have gained ſuch a meaſure of knowledge as may direct you to do that *Whole Duty of Man* which God requires. And the giving thee this inſtruction is the only aim of this Book, which the more ignorant thou art, the more earneſtly I ſhall intreat thee diligently to read. And if thou haſt heretofore approacht to this Holy Sacrament in utter ignorance of theſe neceſſary things, bewail thy ſin in ſo doing, but preſume not to come again till thou haſt by gaining this neceſſary knowledge fitted thy ſelf for it, which thou muſt haſten to do. For though no man muſt come to the Sacrament in ſuch ignorance, yet if he wilfully continue in it, that will be no excuſe to him for keeping from this holy Table.

4. The ſecond part of our examination is concerning our breaches of this Covenant; and here thou wilt find the uſe of that knowledge I ſpake of. For there is no way of diſcovering what our ſins have been, but by trying our Actions by that which ſhould be the rule of them, the Law of God. When therefore thou ſetteſt to this part of examination, remember what are the ſeveral branches of thy duty, and then ask thy own heart in every particular, how thou haſt performed it. And content not thy ſelf with knowing in general, that thou haſt broken Gods Law, but do thy utmoſt to diſcover in what particulars thou haſt done ſo. Recal, as well as thou canſt, all the paſſages of thy life, and in each of them conſider what part of that duty hath been tranſgreſt by it. And that not only in the groſſer act, but in word alſo; nay, even in thy moſt ſecret thoughts: For though mans Law reaches not to them, yet Gods doth; ſo that whatever he forbids in the act, he forbids likewiſe in the thoughts and deſires, and ſees them as clearly as our moſt publick acts. This particular ſearch is exceeding neceſſary; for there is no promiſe of forgiveneſs of any ſin but only to him that confeſſeth and forſaketh it. Now to both theſe it is neceſſary that we have a direct and particular knowledge of our ſins. For how can he either confeſs his Sin, that knows not his guilt of it? or how can he reſolve to forſake it, that diſcerns not himſelf to have formerly cleaved to it? Therefore we may ſurely conclude, that this Examination is not only uſeful but neceſſary towards a full and complete repentance; for he that does not take this particular view of his ſins, will be likely to repent but by halves, which will never avail him towards his pardon; nothing but an entire forſaking of every evil way, being ſufficient for that. But ſurely of all other times it concerns us, that when we come to the Sacrament our repentance be full and complete; and therefore this ſtrict ſearch of our own hearts is then eſpecially neceſſary. For although it be true, that it is not poſſible by all our diligence to diſcover or remember every ſin of our whole lives, and though it be alſo true, that what is ſo unavoidably hid from us, may be forgiven without any more particular confeſſion than that of *David*, Pſal. 19. 12. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret faults*: yet this will be no plea for us, if they come to be ſecret only, becauſe we are negligent in ſearching. Therefore take heed of deceiving thy ſelf in this weighty buſi-

Sins.

Several ſorts.

neſs, but ſearch thy Soul to the bottom, without which it is impoſſible that the wounds thereof ſhould ever be throughly cured.

5. And as you are to enquire thus narrowly concerning the ſeveral Sorts of ſins, ſo alſo muſt you concerning the Degrees of them, for there are divers circumſtances which increaſe and heighten the Sin. Of this ſort there are many; as firſt, when we ſin againſt knowledge, that is, when we certainly know ſuch a thing to be a ſin, yet for the preſent pleaſure or profit (or whatever other motive) adventure on it. This is by Chriſt himſelf adjudged to be a great heightning of the ſin. *He that knows his Maſters will and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes, Luke* 12. 47. Secondly, when we ſin with Deliberation, that is, when we do not fall into it of a ſudden, ere we are aware, but have time to conſider of it, this is another degree of the ſin. But thirdly, a yet higher is, when we do it againſt the Reſiſtances and checks of our own Conſcience, when that at the time tells us, This thing thou oughteſt not to do: Nay, lays before us the danger as well as the ſin of it, yet in ſpight of theſe admonitions of conſcience we go on and commit the ſin; this is a huge increaſe of it, ſuch as will raiſe the leaſt ſin into a moſt high provocation. For it is plain, a ſin thus committed muſt be a wilful one, and then be the matter of it never ſo light, it is moſt hainous in Gods eyes. Nay this is a circumſtance of ſuch force, that it may make an indifferent action that is in it ſelf no ſin, become one. For though my Conſcience ſhould erre in telling me ſuch a thing were unlawful, yet ſo long as I were ſo perſwaded, it were a ſin for me to do that thing; for in that caſe my Will conſents to the doing a thing which I believe to be diſpleaſing to God, and God (who judges us by our Wills, not Underſtandings) imputes it to me as a ſin, as well as if the thing were in it ſelf unlawful. And therefore ſurely we may conclude, that any thing which is in it ſelf ſinful, is made much more ſo by being committed againſt the checks of Conſcience. A fourth aggravation of a ſin is when it hath been often repeated, for then there is not only the guilt of ſo many more Acts, but every Act grows alſo ſo much worſe, and more inexcuſable. We always judge thus in faults committed againſt our ſelves, we can forgive a ſingle injury more eaſily than the ſame when it hath been repeated, and the oftner it hath been ſo repeated, the more hainous we account it. And ſo ſurely it is in faults againſt God alſo. Fifthly, the ſins which have been committed after Vows and Reſolutions of amendment are yet more grievous; for that contains alſo the breaking of thoſe promiſes. Somewhat of this there is in every wilful ſin, becauſe every ſuch is a breach of that Vow we make at Baptiſm. But beſides that, we have ſince bound our ſelves by new Vows, if at no other time, yet ſurely at our coming to the Lords Supper, that being (as was formerly ſaid) purpoſely to repeat our Vows of Baptiſm. And the more of theſe Vows we have made, ſo much the greater is our guilt, if we fall back to any ſin we then renounced. This is a thing very well worth weighing, and therefore examine thy ſelf particularly at thy approach to the Sacrament concerning thy breaches of former Vows made at the Holy Table. And if upon any other occaſion, as ſickneſs, trouble of mind, or the like, thou haſt at any time made any other, call thy ſelf to a ſtrict account how thou haſt performed them alſo, and remember that every ſin committed againſt ſuch vows, is beſides its own natural guilt a Perjury likewiſe. Sixthly, a yet higher ſtep is, when a Sin hath been ſo often committed that we are come to a cuſtom and habit of it: And that is indeed a high degree.

6. Yet

6. Yet even of Habits ſome are worſe than others, as firſt, if it be ſo confirmed that we are come to a hardneſs of heart, have no ſenſe at all of the ſin: Or, ſecondly, if we go on in it againſt any extraordinary means uſed by God to reform us, ſuch as ſickneſs, or any other affliction which ſeems to be ſent on purpoſe for our reclaiming. Or thirdly, if all Reproofs and Exhortations either of Miniſters or private friends work not on us, but either make us angry at our reprovers, or ſet us on defending the ſin. Or laſtly, if this ſinful habit be ſo ſtrong in us as to give us a love to the ſin, not only in our ſelves but in others; if, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 1. 31. *We do not only do the things, but take pleaſure in them that do them*, and therefore entice and draw as many as we can into the ſame ſins with us: Then it is riſen to the higheſt ſtep of wickedneſs, and is to be lookt on as the utmoſt degree both of ſin and danger. Thus you ſee how you are to examine your ſelves concerning your ſins, in each of which you are to conſider how many of theſe heightning circumſtances there have been, that ſo you may aright meaſure the hainouſneſs of them.

7. Now the end of this Examination is, to bring you to ſuch a ſight of your ſins, as may truly humble you, make you ſenſible of your own danger, that have provoked ſo great a Majeſty, who is able ſo ſadly to revenge himſelf upon you, and that will ſurely even to the moſt carnal heart appear a reaſonable ground of ſorrow. But that is not all; it muſt likewiſe bring you to a ſenſe and abhorrence of your baſeneſs and ingratitude, that have thus offended ſo good and gracious a God, that have made ſuch unworthy and unkind returns to thoſe tender and rich mercies of his. And this conſideration eſpecially muſt melt your hearts into a deep ſorrow and contrition, the degree whereof muſt be in ſome meaſure anſwerable to the degree of your ſins. And the greater it is, provided it be not ſuch as ſhuts up the hope of Gods Mercy, the more acceptable it is to God, who hath promiſed not *to deſpiſe a broken and contrite heart*, *Pſal.* 51. 17. And the more likely it will be alſo to bring us to amendment: For if we have once felt what the ſmart of a wounded Spirit is, we ſhall have the leſs mind to venture upon ſin again. *Humiliation.*

8. For when we are tempted with any of the ſhort pleaſures of ſin, we may then out of our own experience ſet againſt them the ſharp pains and terrors of an accuſing conſcience, which will to any that hath felt them be able infinitely to outweigh them. Endeavour therefore to bring your ſelves to this melting temper, to this deep unfeigned ſorrow, and that not only for the danger you have brought upon your ſelf; for though that be a conſideration which may and ought to work ſadneſs in us, yet where that alone is the motive of our ſorrow, it is not that ſorrow which will avail us for pardon; and the reaſon of it is clear, for that ſorrow proceeds only from the love of our ſelves, we are ſorry becauſe we are like to ſmart. But the ſorrow of a true penitent muſt be joyned alſo with the love of God, and that will make us grieve for having offended him, though there were no puniſhment to fall upon our ſelves. The way then to ſtir up this ſorrow in us, is firſt, to ſtir up our love of God, by repeating to our ſelves the many gracious acts of his mercy towards us, particularly that of his ſparing us, and not cutting us off in our ſins. Conſider with thy ſelf how many and how great provocations thou haſt offered him, perhaps in a continued courſe of many years wilful diſobedience, for which thou mighteſt with perfect juſtice have been ere this ſent quick into Hell: Nay, poſſibly thou haſt before thee many examples of leſs ſinners than thou art, who have been ſuddenly ſnatcht away in the midſt of their ſins. And what *Contrition.*

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cauſe canſt thou give, why thou haſt thus long eſcaped, but only becauſe his eye hath ſpared thee? And what cauſe of that ſparing, but his tender compaſſions towards thee, his unwillingneſs that thou ſhouldſt periſh? This conſideration if it be preſt home upon thy Soul, cannot chuſe (if thy heart be not as hard as the nether Milſtone) but awake ſomewhat of love in thee towards this gracious, this long-ſuffering God, and that love will certainly make it appear to thee, that it is an *evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord, Jer.* 2. 19. That thou haſt made ſuch wretched requitals of ſo great mercy; it will make thee both aſhamed and angry at thy ſelf that thou haſt been ſuch an unthankful creature. But if the conſideration of this one ſort of mercy, Gods forbearance only, be ſuch an engagement and help to this godly ſorrow, what will then be the multitude of thoſe other mercies which every man is able to reckon up to himſelf? And therefore let every man be as particular in it as he can, call to mind as many of them as he is able, that ſo he may attain to the greater degree of true contrition.

9. And to all theſe endeavours muſt be added earneſt prayers to God, that he by his holy Spirit would ſhew you your ſins, and ſoften your hearts, that you may throughly bewail and lament them.

Confeſſion. 10. To this muſt be joyned an humble confeſſion of ſins to God, and that not only in general, but alſo in particular, as far as your memory of them will reach, and that with all thoſe heightning circumſtances of them, which you have by the forementioned examination diſcovered. Yea, even ſecret and forgotten ſins muſt in general be acknowledged; for it is certain there are multitudes of ſuch; ſo that it is neceſſary for every one of us to ſay with *David, Pſal.* 19. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors? Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret faults.* When you have thus confeſt your ſins with this hearty ſorrow, and ſincere hatred of them, you may then (and not before) be concluded to feel ſo much of your diſeaſe, that it will be ſeaſonable to apply the remedy.

Faith. 11. In the next place therefore you are to look on him whom God *hath ſet forth to be the propitiation for our ſins,* Rom. 3. 25. *Even Jeſus Chriſt that Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſins of the world, Joh.* 1. 29. And earneſtly beg of God, that by his moſt precious bloud your ſins may be waſhed away; and that God would for his ſake be reconciled to you. And this you are to believe will ſurely be done, if you do for the reſt of your time forſake your ſins, and give your ſelves up ſincerely to obey God in all his Commands. But without that, it is vain to hope any benefit from Chriſt, or his ſufferings. And therefore the next part of your preparation muſt be the ſetting thoſe reſolutions of obedience, which I told you was the third thing you are to examine your ſelves of before your approach to the holy Sacrament.

Reſolutions of Obedience. 12. Concerning the particulars of this Reſolution, I need ſay no more, but that it muſt anſwer every part, and branch of our duty; that is, we muſt not only in general reſolve that we will obſerve Gods Commandments, but we muſt reſolve it for every Commandment by it ſelf; and eſpecially where we have found our ſelves moſt to have failed heretofore, there eſpecially to renew our reſolutions. And herein it nearly concerns us to look that theſe reſolutions be ſincere and unfeigned, and not only ſuch ſlight ones as people uſe out of cuſtom to put on at their coming to the Sacrament, which they never think of keeping afterwards. For this is a certain truth, that whoſoever comes to this holy Table without an entire hatred of every ſin, comes unworthily; and it is as ſure, that he that doth

doth entirely hate all ſin, will reſolve to forſake it; for you know forſaking naturally follows hatred, no man willingly abides with a thing or perſon he hates. And therefore he that doth not ſo reſolve, as that God the ſearcher of hearts may approve it as ſincere, cannot be ſuppoſed to hate ſin, and ſo cannot be a worthy receiver of that holy Sacrament. Therefore try your reſolutions throughly, that you deceive not your ſelves in them; it is your own great danger, if you do; for it is certain you cannot deceive God, nor gain acceptation from him by any thing which is not perfectly hearty and unfeigned.

Of the means.

13. Now as you are to reſolve on this new obedience, ſo you are likewiſe to reſolve on the Means, which may aſſiſt you in the performance of it. And therefore conſider in every duty, what are the means that may help you in it, and reſolve to make uſe of them, how uneaſie ſoever they be to your fleſh; ſo on the other ſide conſider what things they are, that are likely to lead you to ſin, and reſolve to ſhun and avoid them: This you are to do in reſpect of all ſins whatever, but eſpecially in thoſe, whereof you have formerly been guilty. For there it will not be hard for you to find, by what ſteps and degrees you were drawn into it, what Company what Occaſion it was that enſnared you, as alſo to what ſort of Temptations you are apteſt to yield. And therefore you muſt particularly fence your ſelf againſt the ſin, by avoiding thoſe occaſions of it.

14. But it is not enough that you reſolve you will do all this hereafter, but you muſt inſtantly ſet to it, and begin the courſe by doing at the preſent whatſoever you have opportunity of doing. And there are ſeveral things which you may, nay, muſt do at the preſent, before you come to the Sacrament.

Preſent renouncing of ſin.

15. As firſt, you muſt caſt off every ſin, not bring any one unmortified luſt with you to that Table; for it is not enough to purpoſe to caſt them off afterwards, but you muſt then actually do it by withdrawing all degrees of love and affection from them; you muſt then give a bill of divorce to all your old beloved ſins, or elſe you are in no way fit to be married to Chriſt. The reaſon of this is clear; for this Sacrament is our ſpiritual nouriſhment; now before we can receive ſpiritual nouriſhment we muſt have ſpiritual life, (for no man gives food to a dead perſon.) But whoſoever continues not only in the act, but in the love of any one known ſin, hath no ſpiritual life, but is in Gods account no better than a dead carkaſs, and therefore cannot receive that ſpiritual food. It is true he may eat the bread, and drink the wine, but he receives not Chriſt, but inſtead of him, that which is moſt dreadful; the Apoſtle will tell you what, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *He eats and drinks his own damnation.* Therefore you ſee how great a neceſſity lies on you thus actually to put off every ſin before you come to this Table.

Imbracing vertue.

16. And the ſame neceſſity lies on you for a ſecond thing to be done at this time, and that is, the putting your ſoul into a heavenly and Chriſtian temper; by poſſeſſing it with all thoſe Graces which may render it acceptable in the eyes of God. For when you have turned out Satan and his accurſed train, you muſt not let your Soul lie empty; if you do, Chriſt tells you, *Luke* 11. 26. He will *quickly return again, and your laſt eſtate ſhall be worſe than your firſt.* But you muſt by earneſt prayer invite into it the holy Spirit with his Graces, or if they be in ſome degree there already, you muſt pray that he will yet more fully poſſeſs it, and you muſt quicken and ſtir them up.

17. As

Quickening of graces. 17. As for example, you must quicken your humility, by considering your many and great sins: Your Faith, by meditating on Gods promises to all penitent sinners: Your love to God, by considering his mercies, especially those remembred in the Sacrament, his giving Christ to die for us; and your love to your neighbour, nay to your enemies, by considering that great example of his suffering for us that were enemies to him. And it is most particularly required of us when we come to this Table that we copy out this pattern of his in a perfect forgiveness of all that have offended us, and not only forgiveness, but such a kindness also as will express it self in all offices of love and friendship to them.

Charity. 18. And if you have formerly so quite forgot that blessed example of his, as to do the direct contrary; if you have done any unkindness or injury to any person, then you are to seek forgiveness from him: And to that end, first acknowledge your fault, and secondly restore to him, to the utmost of your power, whatsoever you have deprived him of, either in goods or credit. This Reconciliation with our brethren is absolutely necessary towards the making any of our services acceptable with God, as appears by that precept of Christ, *Matt.* 5. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Where you see, that though the gift be already at the Altar, it must rather be left there unoffered, than be offered by a man that is not at perfect peace with his neighbour. And if this Charity be so necessary in all our services, much more in this, where by a joynt partaking in the same holy mysteries, we signifie our being united and knit not only to Christ our head, but also to each other as fellow-members. And therefore if we come with any malice in our hearts, we commit an act of the highest Hypocrisie, by making a solemn profession in the Sacrament of that charity and brotherly love, whereof our hearts are quite void.

Devotion. 19. Another most necessary grace at this time is that of Devotion, for the raising whereof we must allow our selves some time to withdraw from our worldly affairs, and wholly to set our selves to this business of preparation; one very special part of which preparation lies in raising up our Souls to a devout and heavenly temper. And to that it is most necessary that we cast off all thoughts of the world, for they will be sure as so many clogs to hinder our Souls in their mounting towards heaven. A special exercise of this devotion is Prayer, wherein we must be very frequent and earnest at our coming to the Sacrament, this being one great instrument wherein we must obtain all those other graces required in our preparation. Therefore be sure this be not omitted; for if you use never so much endeavour besides, and leave out this, it is the going to work in your own strength without looking to God for his help, and then it is impossible you should prosper in it: *For we are not able of our selves to think any thing, as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God,* 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. Therefore be instant with him so to assist you with his grace, that you may come so fitted to this Holy Table, that you may be partakers of the benefits there reached out to all worthy receivers.

Necessity of these graces. 20. These and all other spiritual Graces our Souls must be cloathed with when we come to this Feast; for this is that Wedding-garment, without which whosoever comes, is like to have the entertainment mentioned in the parable of him who came to the marriage without a *wedding-garment,* Matt. 22. 13. *who was cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and*

gnashing

gnaſhing of teeth; for though it is poſſible he may ſit it out at the preſent and not be ſnatched from the Table, yet S. *Paul* aſſures him, *he drinks damnation to himſelf*, and how ſoon it may fall on him is uncertain: But it is ſure, it will, if repentance prevent it not; and as ſure that whenever it does come, it will be *intolerable: For who among us can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Iſa. 33. 14.

The uſefulneſs of a ſpiritual guide.

21. I ſhall add but one thing more concerning the things which are to be done before the Sacrament, and that is an advice, that if any perſon upon a ſerious view of himſelf cannot ſatisfie his own Soul of his ſincerity, and ſo doubts whether he may come to the Sacrament, he do not reſt wholly on his own judgment in the caſe; for if he be a truly humbled Soul, it is likely he may judge too hardly of himſelf; if he be not, it is odds, but if he be left to the ſatisfying his own doubts, he will quickly bring himſelf to paſs too favourable a ſentence. Or whether he be the one or the other, if he come to the Sacrament in that doubt, he certainly plunges himſelf into farther doubts and ſcruples, if not into ſin: On the other ſide, if he forbear becauſe of it, if that fear be a cauſleſs one, then he groundleſly abſents himſelf from that Holy Ordinance, and ſo deprives his Soul of the benefits of it. Therefore in the midſt of ſo many dangers which attend the miſtake of himſelf, I would, as I ſaid before, exhort him not to truſt to his own judgment, but to make known his caſe to ſome diſcreet and godly Miniſter, and rather be guided by his, who will probably (if the caſe be duly and without any diſguiſe diſcovered to him) be better able to judge of him than he of himſelf. This is the counſel the Church gives in the Exhortation before the Communion, where it is adviſed, that if any by other means there forementioned, *cannot quiet his own Conſcience, but require farther counſel and comfort*, then *let him go to ſome diſcreet and learned Miniſter of Gods Word, and open his grief, that he may receive ſuch ghoſtly counſel, advice and comfort, that his conſcience may be relieved*, &c. This is ſurely ſuch advice as ſhould not be neglected neither at the time of coming to the Sacrament, nor any other, when we are under any fear or reaſons of doubt concerning the ſtate of our Souls. And for want of this many have run into very great miſchief, having let the doubt feſter ſo long, that it hath either plunged them into deep diſtreſſes of conſcience, or, which is worſe, they have to ſtill that diſquiet within them, betaken themſelves to all ſinful pleaſures, and ſo quite caſt off all care of their Souls.

Not to be aſhamed to diſcover our ſelves to one.

22. But to all this it will perhaps be ſaid, that this cannot be done without diſcovering the nakedneſs and blemiſhes of the Soul, and there is ſhame in that, and therefore men are unwilling to do it. But to that I anſwer, That it is very unreaſonable that ſhould be a hindrance: For firſt, I ſuppoſe you are to chuſe only ſuch a perſon as will faithfully keep any ſecret you ſhall commit to him, and ſo it can be no publick ſhame you can fear. And if it be in reſpect of that ſingle perſon, you need not fear that neither; for ſuppoſing him a godly man, he will not think the worſe of you, but the better, that you are ſo deſirous to ſet all right between God and your Soul. But if indeed there were ſhame in it, yet as long as it may be a means to cure both your trouble and your ſin too (as certainly godly and faithful counſel may tend much to both) that ſhame ought to be deſpiſed; and it is ſure it would, if we loved our Souls as well as our Bodies: For in bodily diſeaſes, be they never ſo foul or ſhameful, we count him a fool who will rather miſs the cure than diſcover it; and then it muſt here be ſo much a greater folly, by how much the Soul is more precious than the Body.

As neceſſary to the confident as to the doubtful.

23. But God knows it is not only doubtful perſons to whom this advice might be uſeful, there are others of another ſort, whoſe confidence is their diſeaſe, who preſume very groundleſly of the goodneſs of their eſtates: And for thoſe it were moſt happy, if they could be brought to hear ſome more equal judgments than their own in this ſo weighty a buſineſs. The truth is, we are generally ſo apt to favour our ſelves, that it might be very uſeful for the moſt, eſpecially the more ignorant ſort, ſometimes to adviſe with a ſpiritual guide; to enable them to paſs right judgments on themſelves; and not only ſo, but to receive directions, how to ſubdue and mortifie thoſe ſins they are moſt inclined to, which is a matter of ſo much difficulty, that we have no reaſon to deſpiſe any means that may help us in it.

At the time of receiving. Meditation of thy unworthineſs.

24. I have now gone through thoſe ſeveral parts of duty we are to perform *Before* our Receiving; in the next place, I am to tell you, what is to be done *At the time of Receiving*. When thou art at the holy Table; firſt humble thy ſelf in an unfeigned acknowledgment of thy great unworthineſs to be admitted there; and to that purpoſe remember again between God and thine own Soul, ſome of thy greateſt, and fouleſt ſins, thy breaches of former Vows made at that Table, eſpecially ſince thy laſt Receiving.

The ſufferings of Chriſt.

Then meditate on thoſe bitter Sufferings of Chriſt which are ſet out to us in the Sacrament: When thou ſeeſt the bread broken, remember how his bleſſed body was torn with nails upon the Croſs; when thou ſeeſt the Wine poured out, remember how his precious Bloud was ſpilt there; and then conſider, it was thy ſins that cauſed both. And here think how unworthy a wretch thou art to have done that which occaſioned ſuch torments to Him: how much worſe than his very Crucifiers. They crucified him once, but thou haſt, as much as in thee lay, crucified him daily. They crucified him becauſe they knew him not, but thou haſt known both what he is in himſelf, *The Lord of Glory*, and what he is to thee, a moſt tender and merciful Saviour, and yet thou haſt ſtill continued thus to crucifie him afreſh. Conſider this, and let it work in thee, firſt a great ſorrow for thy ſins paſt, and then a great hatred and a firm reſolution againſt them for the time to come.

The atonement wrought by them.

25. When thou haſt a while thus thought on theſe ſufferings of Chriſt for the increaſing thy humility and contrition; then in the ſecond place think of them again, to ſtir up thy Faith; look on him as the Sacrifice offered up for thy ſins, for the appeaſing of Gods wrath and procuring his favour and mercies toward thee. And therefore believingly, yet humbly beg of God to accept of that Satisfaction made by his innocent and beloved Son, and for the merits thereof to pardon thee whatever is paſt, and to be fully reconciled to thee.

The thankfulneſs owing for them.

26. In the third place conſider them again to raiſe thy Thankfulneſs. Think how much both of ſhame and pain he there endured, but eſpecially thoſe great agonies of his Soul, which drew from him that bitter cry, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Matt.* 27. 45. Now all this he ſuffered only to keep thee from periſhing. And therefore conſider what unexpreſſible thanks thou oweſt him; and endeavour to raiſe thy Soul to the moſt zealous and hearty thankſgiving: For this is a principal part of duty at this time, the praiſing and magnifying that mercy which hath redeemed us by ſo dear a price. Therefore it will here well become thee to ſay with *David, I will take the Cup of Salvation, and will call upon the Name of the Lord.*

The great love of Chriſt in them.

27. Fourthly, look on theſe ſufferings of Chriſt to ſtir up thy love; and ſurely there cannot be a more effectual means of doing it; for here the love

love of Christ to thee is most manifest, according to that of the Apostle, 1 *John* 3. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God toward us, because he laid down his life for us.* And that even the highest degree of *love*, for as himself tells us, *John* 15. 13. *Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend.* Yet even greater love than this had he; for he not only died, but died the most painful and most reproachful death, and that not for his friends, but for his utter enemies. And therefore if after all this love on his part there be no return of love on ours, we are worse than the vilest sort of men, for even the *Publicans*, Matth. 5. 46. *love those that love them.* Here therefore chide and reproach thy self that thy love to him is so faint and cool, when his to thee was so zealous and affectionate. And endeavour to enkindle this holy flame in thy Soul, to love him in such a degree, that thou mayest be ready to copy out his example, to part with all things, yea, even life it self whenever he calls for it, that is, whensoever thy obedience to any command of his shall lay thee open to those sufferings. But in the mean time to resolve never again to make any league with his enemies, to entertain or harbour any sin in thy breast. But if there have any such hitherto remained with thee, make this the season to kill and crucifie it; offer it up at this instant a sacrifice to him who was sacrificed for thee, and particularly for that very end that *he might redeem thee from all iniquity.* Therefore here make thy solemn resolutions to forsake every sin, particularly, those into which thou hast most frequently fallen. And that thou mayest indeed perform those resolutions, earnestly beg of this crucified Saviour, that he will, by the power of his death, mortifie and kill all thy corruptions.

The benefits of the New Covenant sealed in the Sacrament.

28. When thou art about to receive the Consecrated Bread and Wine, remember that God now offers to Seal to thee that New Covenant made with Mankind in his Son. For since he gives that his Son in the Sacrament, he gives with him all the benefits of that Covenant, to wit, pardon of Sins, Sanctifying grace, and a Title to an eternal inheritance. And here be astonished at the infinite goodness of God, who reaches out to thee so precious a treasure. But then remember that this is all but on condition that thou perform thy part of the Covenant. And therefore settle in thy soul the most serious purpose of obedience, and then with all possible devotion joyn with the Minister in that short but excellent prayer, used at the instant of giving the Sacrament, *The body of our Lord*, &c.

Upon Receiving give thanks

29. So soon as thou hast Received, offer up thy devoutest Praises for that great mercy, together with thy most earnest prayers for such assistance of Gods Spirit as may enable thee to perform the Vow thou hast now made. Then remembring that Christ is *a propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world*; let thy charity reach as far as his hath done, and pray for all mankind that every one may receive the benefit of that Sacrifice of His; commend also to God the estate of the Church, that particularly whereof thou art a Member. And forget not to pray for all to whom thou owest Obedience, both in Church and State; and so go on to pray for such particular persons as either thy Relations or their wants shall present to thee. If there be any Collection for the Poor (as there always ought to be at this time) give freely according to thy ability; or if by the default of others, there be no such Collection, yet do thou privately design something towards the relief of thy poor brethren, and be sure to give it, the next fitting oppertunity that offers it self. All this thou must contrive to do in the time that others are receiving, that so when the publick prayers after the Administration begin, thou mayest be

Pray.

ready to joyn in them, which thou must likewise take care to do with all devotion. Thus much for behaviour At the time of Receiving.

After the Sacrament.

30. Now follows the third and last thing, that is, what thou art to do After thy Receiving. That which is immediately to be done, is as soon as thou art retir'd from the Congregation, to offer up again to God thy Sacrifice of Praise for all those precious mercies conveyed to thee in that holy Sacrament, and also humbly to intreat the continued assistance of his grace to enable thee to make good all those purposes of obedience thou hast now made. And in whatsoever thou knowest thy self most in danger, either in respect of any former habit, or natural inclination, there especially desire and earnestly beg his aid.

Private Prayer and thanksgiving.

Not presently to fall to worldly affairs.

31. When thou hast done thus, do not presently let thy self loose to thy worldly cares and business, but spend all that day, either in meditating, praying, reading, good conferences, or the like; so as may best keep up that holy flame that is enkindled in thy heart. Afterwards when thy calling requires thee to fall to thy usual affairs, do it, but yet still remember that thou hast a greater business than that upon thy hands; that is, the performing of all those promises, thou so lately madest to God; and therefore whatever thy outward employments are, let thy heart be set on that, keep all the particulars of thy resolutions in memory, and whenever thou art tempted to any of thy old sins, then consider, this is the thing thou so solemnly vowedst against, and withal remember what a horrible guilt it will be if thou shouldst now wilfully do any thing contrary to that vow; yea, and what a horrible mischief also it will be to thy self. For at thy receiving, God and thou entredst into Covenant, into a league of friendship and kindness. And as long as thou keepest in that friendship with God, thou art safe, all the malice of Men or Devils can do thee no harm: For as the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 8. 31. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* But if thou breakest this league (as thou certainly doest, if thou yieldest to any wilful sin) then God and thou are enemies, and if all the world then were for thee, it could not avail thee.

To keep thy resolutions still in memory.

The danger of breaking them.

Making God thy enemy.

Thy own Conscience.

32. Nay, thou wilt get an enemy within thine own bosom, thy conscience accusing and upbraiding thee; and when God and thine own conscience are thus against thee, thou canst not but be extremely miserable even in this life, besides that fearful expectation of wrath which awaits thee in the next. Remember all this when thou art set upon by any temptation, and then sure thou canst not but look upon that temptation as a cheat that comes to rob thee of thy Peace, thy God, thy very Soul. And then sure it will appear as unfit to entertain it, as thou wouldst think it to harbour one in thy house who thou knowest came to rob thee of what is dearest to thee.

Gods former pardons no incouragement to sin.

33. And let not any experience of Gods mercy in pardoning thee heretofore, encourage thee again to provoke him; for besides that it is the highest degree of wickedness and unthankfulness to make that *goodness of his which should lead thee to repentance* an encouragement in thy sin: Besides this, I say, the oftner thou hast been pardoned, the less reason thou hast to expect it again, because thy sin is so much the greater for having been committed against so much mercy. If a King have several times pardoned an offender, yet if he still return to commission of the same fault, the King will at last be forced if he have any love to Justice, to give him up to it. Now so it is here, God is as well just as merciful, and his Justice will at last surely and heavily avenge the abuse of his Mercy; and there cannot be a greater abuse of his mercy than to sin in hope of it: So that

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it will prove a miſerable deceiving of thy ſelf thus to preſume upon it.

34. Now this care of making good thy Vow muſt not abide with thee ſome few days only, and then be caſt aſide, but it muſt continue with thee all thy days. For if thou break thy Vow, it matters not whether ſooner or later. Nay perhaps the guilt may in ſome reſpects be more, if it be late, for if thou haſt for a good while gone on in the obſervance of it, that ſhews the thing is poſſible to thee; and ſo thy after-breaches are not of infirmity, becauſe thou canſt not avoid them, but of perverſeneſs, becauſe thou wilt not. Beſides, the uſe of Chriſtian walking muſt needs make it more eaſie to thee. For indeed all the difficulty of it is but from the cuſtom of the contrary: And therefore if after ſome acquaintance with it, when thou haſt overcome ſomewhat of the hardneſs, thou ſhalt then give it over, it will be moſt inexcuſable. Therefore be careful all the days of thy life to keep ſuch a watch over thy ſelf, and ſo to avoid all occaſions of temptations, as may preſerve thee from all wilful breaches of this Vow. *The Obligation of this vow perpetual.*

35. But though the obligation of every ſuch ſingle vow reach to the utmoſt day of our lives, yet are we often to renew it, that is, we are often to receive the holy Sacrament, for that being the means of conveying to us ſo great and unvaluable benefits, and it being alſo a command of Chriſt, that we ſhould *do this in remembrance of him*, we are in reſpect both of reaſon and duty to omit no fit opportunity of partaking of that holy Table. I have now ſhewed you what that reverence is which we are to pay to God in his Sacrament. *Yet often to be renewed.*

SUNDAY IV.

Honour due to Gods name, Sins againſt it; Blaſphemy; Swearing; of Aſſertory, Promiſſory, unlawful Oaths; of Perjury, vain Oaths, and the Sin of them, &c.

Sect. 1. THE laſt thing wherein we are to expreſs our Reverence to him, is the Honouring of his Name. Now what this Honouring of his Name is, we ſhall beſt underſtand by conſidering what are the things by which it is diſhonoured, the avoiding of which will be our way of honouring it. *Honour due to Gods Name.*

The firſt is, all Blaſphemies, or ſpeaking any evil thing of God, the higheſt degree whereof is curſing him, or if we do not ſpeak it with our mouths, yet if we do it in our hearts by thinking any unworthy thing of him; it is lookt on by God, who ſees the heart, as the vileſt diſhonour. But there is alſo a blaſphemy of the Actions, that is, when men who profeſs to be the ſervants of God, live ſo wickedly that they bring up an evil report of him whom they own as their Maſter and Lord. This Blaſphemy the Apoſtle takes notice of, *Rom.* 2. 24. where he tells thoſe who profeſs to be obſervers of the Law, *That by their wicked actions, the Name of God was blaſphemed among the Gentiles.* Thoſe Gentiles were moved to think ill of God, as the favourer of ſin, when they ſaw thoſe, who called themſelves his ſervants, commit it. *Sins againſt it.* *Blaſphemy.*

A ſecond way of Diſhonouring Gods Name is by ſwearing, and that is of two ſorts, either by falſe Oaths, or elſe by raſh and light ones. A falſe Oath may alſo be of two kinds, as firſt, that by which I affirm ſomewhat, or ſecondly, that by which I promiſe. The firſt is, when I ſay ſuch or ſuch a thing was done ſo or ſo, and confirm this ſaying of mine with an Oath; if then I know there be not perfect truth in what I ſay, this is a flat perjury, *Swearing.* *Aſſertory Oaths.*

ry, a down-right being forſworn: Nay, if I ſwear to the truth of that whereof I am only doubtful, though the thing ſhould happen to be true, yet it brings upon me the guilt of Perjury; for I ſwear at a venture, and the thing might for ought I knew be as well falſe as true, whereas I ought never to ſwear any thing, the truth of which I do not certainly know.

Promiſſory. 2. But beſides this ſort of Oaths, by which I affirm any thing, there is the other ſort, that by which I promiſe ſomewhat. And that promiſe may be either to God or man; when it is to God, we call it a Vow, of which I have already ſpoken, under the heads of the Sacraments, I ſhall now only ſpeak of that to man; and this may become a falſe oath, either at, or after the time of taking it. At the time of taking, it is falſe, if either I have then no real purpoſe of making it good, or elſe take it in a ſence different from that which I know he to whom I make the promiſe underſtands it; for the uſe of Oaths being to aſſure the perſons to whom they are made, they muſt be taken in their ſence. But if I were never ſo ſincere at the taking the Oath, if afterwards I do not perform it, I am certainly perjured.

Unlawful Oaths. 3. The nature of an Oath being then thus binding, it nearly concerns us to look that the Matter of our oaths be lawful, for elſe we run our ſelves into a woful ſnare. For example, ſuppoſe I ſwear to kill a man, If I perform my oath, I am guilty of Murder, if I break it, of Perjury. And ſo I am under a neceſſity of ſinning one way or other: but there is nothing puts us under a greater degree of this unhappy neceſſity, than when we ſwear two Oaths, whereof the one is directly croſs and contradictory to the other. For if I ſwear to give a man my whole eſtate, and afterwards ſwear to give all or part of that eſtate to another, it is certain I muſt break my oath to one of them, becauſe it is impoſſible to perform it to both, and ſo I muſt be under a neceſſity of being forſworn. And into this unhappy ſtrait every man brings himſelf that takes any Oath which croſſes ſome other which he hath formerly taken; which ſhould make all, that love either God or their own ſouls, reſolve never thus miſerably to entangle themſelves by taking one oath croſs and thwarting to another. But it may perhaps here be asked, What a perſon that hath already brought himſelf into ſuch a condition, ſhall do? I anſwer, he muſt firſt heartily repent of the great ſin of taking the unlawful oath, and then ſtick only to the lawful, which is all that is in his power towards the repairing his fault, and qualifying him for Gods pardon for it.

God greatly diſhonoured by Perjury. 4. Having ſaid this concerning the kinds of this ſin of Perjury, I ſhall only add a few words to ſhew you how greatly Gods Name is diſhonoured by it. In all oaths you know, God is ſolemnly called to witneſs the truth of that which is ſpoken; now if the thing be falſe, it is the baſeſt affront and diſhonour that can poſſibly be done to God. For it is in reaſon to ſignifie one of theſe two things, either that we believe he knows not whether we ſay true or no; (and that is to make him no God, to ſuppoſe him to be as deceivable, and eaſie to be deluded as one of our ignorant neighbours) or elſe that he is willing to countenance our Lyes; the former robs him of that great Attribute of his, his knowing all things, and is ſurely a great diſhonouring of him, it being even amongſt men accounted one of the greateſt diſgraces, to account a man fit to have cheats put upon him; yet even ſo we deal with God, if we venture to forſwear upon a hope that God diſcerns it not. But the other is yet worſe, for the ſuppoſing him willing to countenance our lies, is the making him a party in them; and is not only the making him no God (it being impoſſible that God ſhould

either

either lie himſelf, or approve it in another) but is the making him like the very Devil. For he it is that is a liar, and the Father of it, *John* 8. 44. And ſurely I need not ſay more to prove that this is the higheſt degree of diſhonouring Gods Name.

The puniſhments of it.

5. But if any yet doubt the hainouſneſs of this Sin, let him but conſider what God himſelf ſays of it in the third Commandment, where he ſolemnly profeſſes, *He will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain*; And ſure the adding that to this Commandment, and none of the reſt, is the marking this out for a moſt hainous guilt. And if you look into *Zach.* 5. you will there find the puniſhment is anſwerable, even to the utter deſtruction, not only of the man, but his houſe alſo. Therefore it concerns all men, as they love either their temporal or eternal welfare, to keep them moſt ſtrictly from this ſin.

Vain Oaths

But beſides this of forſwearing, I told you there was another ſort of Oaths by which Gods Name is diſhonoured; thoſe are the vain and light Oaths, ſuch as are ſo uſual in our common diſcourſe, and are expreſly forbidden by Chriſt, *Matth.* 5. 34. *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is Gods throne, nor by the Earth, for it is his footſtool*: where you ſee we are not allowed to ſwear even by meer creatures, becauſe of the relation they have to God. How great a wickedneſs is it then to prophane his holy Name by raſh and vain Oaths? This is a ſin that is (by I know not what charm of Satans) grown into a faſhion among us; and now its being ſo, draws daily more men into it. But it is to be remembred that when we ſhall appear before Gods Judgment-ſeat to anſwer for thoſe prophanations of his Name, it will be no excuſe to ſay, It was the faſhion to do ſo: it will rather be an increaſe of our guilt, that we have by our own practice helped to confirm that wicked cuſtom, which we ought to have beat down and diſcountenanced.

The ſin of them.

6. And ſure whatever this prophane age thinks of it, this is a ſin of a very high nature. For beſides that it is a direct breach of the Precept of Chriſt, it ſhews firſt, a very mean and low eſteem of God: every Oath we ſwear is the appealing to God to judge the truth of what we ſpeak, and therefore being of ſuch greatneſs and Majeſty, requires that the matter concerning which we thus appeal to him ſhould be of great weight and moment, ſomewhat wherein either his own glory, or ſome conſiderable good of man is concern'd. But when we ſwear in common diſcourſe, it is far otherwiſe; and the triflingeſt or lighteſt thing ſerves for the matter of an Oath; nay, often men ſwear to ſuch vain and fooliſh things, as a conſidering perſon would be aſhamed barely to ſpeak. And is it not a great deſpiſing of God to call him ſolemnly to judge in ſuch childiſh, ſuch wretched matters? God is the great King of the world; now though a King be to be reſorted unto in weighty caſes, yet ſure he would think himſelf much deſpiſed, if he ſhould be called to judge between Boyes at their childiſh games; and God knows many things whereto we frequently ſwear, are not of greater weight, and therefore are a ſign that we do not rightly eſteem of God.

They lead to perjury.

7. Secondly, This common ſwearing is a ſin which leads directly to the former of forſwearing; for he that by the uſe of ſwearing hath made Oaths ſo familiar to him, will be likely to take the dreadfulleſt Oath without much conſideration. For how ſhall he that ſwears hourly, look upon an Oath with any reverence? And he that doth not, it is his chance, not his care that is to be thanked, if he keep from Perjury. Nay, further; he that ſwears commonly, is not only prepared to forſwear when a ſolemn

Oath

Oath is tendred him, but in all probability does actually forſwear himſelf often in theſe ſuddener Oaths: For ſuppoſing them to come from a man ere he is aware (which is the beſt can be ſaid of them) what aſſurance can any man have who ſwears ere he is aware, that he ſhall not lie ſo too? And if he doth both together, he muſt neceſſarily be forſworn. But he that obſerves your common ſwearers will be put paſt doubt that they are often forſworn. For they uſually ſwear indifferently to things true or falſe, doubtful or certain. And I doubt not but if men who are guilty of this ſin would but impartially examine their own practice, their hearts would ſecond me in this obſervation.

No temptation to them.

8. Thirdly, This is a ſin to which there is no temptation, there is nothing either of pleaſure or profit got by it: Moſt other ſins offer us ſomewhat either of the one or the other, but this is utterly empty of both. So that in this ſin the Devil does not play the Merchant for our Souls, as in others he does; he doth not ſo much as cheapen them, but we give them freely into his hands without any thing in exchange. There ſeems to be but one thing poſſible for men to hope to gain by it, and that is to be believed in what they ſay, when they thus bind it by an oath. But this alſo they conſtantly fail of; for there are none ſo little believed as the common ſwearers. And good reaſon, for he that makes no conſcience thus to profane Gods Name, why ſhall any man believe he makes any of lying? Nay their forwardneſs to confirm every the ſlighteſt thing by an oath, rather gives jealouſie that they have ſome inward guilt of falſeneſs, for which that oath muſt be the cloak. And thus you ſee in how little ſtead it ſtands them, even to this only purpoſe for which they can pretend it uſeful: And to any other advantage it makes not the leaſt claim, and therefore is a ſin without temptation, and conſequently without excuſe; for it ſhews the greateſt contempt, nay, unkindneſs to God, when we will provoke him thus, without any thing to tempt us to it. And therefore though the commonneſs of this ſin hath made it paſs but for a ſmall one, yet it is very far from being ſo either in it ſelf, or in Gods account.

Neceſſity of abſtaining from them.

9. Let all therefore who are not yet fallen into the cuſtom of this ſin, be moſt careful never to yield to the leaſt beginnings of it, and for thoſe who are ſo miſerable, as to be already enſnared in it, let them immediately as they tender their Souls, get out of it. And let no man plead the hardneſs of leaving an old cuſtom, as an excuſe for his continuing in it, but rather the longer he hath been in it, ſo much the more haſte let him make out of it, as thinking it too too much, that he hath ſo long gone on in ſo great a ſin. And if the length of the cuſtom have increaſed the difficulty of leaving it, that is in all reaſon to make him ſet immediately to the caſting it off, leſt that difficulty at laſt grow to an impoſſibility; and the harder he finds it at the preſent, ſo much the more diligent and watchful he muſt be in the uſe of all thoſe means which may tend to the overcoming that ſinful habit: Some few of thoſe means it will not be amiſs here to mention.

Means for it.

Senſe of the guilt and danger.

10. Firſt, let him poſſeſs his mind fully of the hainouſneſs of the ſin, and not to meaſure it only according to the common rate of the world. And when he is fully perſwaded of the guilt, then let him add to that, the conſideration of the danger, as that it puts him out of Gods favour at the preſent, and will, if he continue in it, caſt him into Hell for ever. And ſure if this were but throughly laid to heart, it would reſtrain this ſin. For I would ask a man that pretends impoſſibility of leaving the cuſtom, whether if he were ſure he ſhould be hanged the next Oath he ſwore, the fear

of

of it would not keep him from ſwearing? I can ſcarce believe any man in his wits ſo little Maſter of himſelf, but it would. And then ſurely damning is ſo much worſe than hanging, that in all reaſon the fear of that ought to be a much greater reſtraint. The doubt is, men do either not heartily believe that this ſin will damn them, or if they do, they look on it as a thing a great way off, and ſo are not much moved with it; but both theſe are very unreaſonable. For the firſt, it is certain, that every one that continues wilfully in any ſin is ſo long in a ſtate of damnation, and therefore this being ſo continued in, muſt certainly put a man in that condition. For the ſecond, it is very poſſible, he may be deceived in thinking it ſo far off, for how knows any man that he ſhall not be ſtruck dead with an Oath in his mouth? Or if he were ſure not to be ſo, yet eternal damnation is ſurely to be dreaded above all things, be it at what diſtance ſoever.

Truth in ſpeaking.

11. A ſecond means is to be exactly true in all thou ſpeakeſt; that all men may believe thee on thy bare word, and then thou wilt never have occaſion to confirm it by an oath, to make it more credible, which is the only colour or reaſon can at any time be pretended for ſwearing.

Forſaking the occaſions.

12. Thirdly, Obſerve what it is that moſt betrays thee to this ſin, whether drink, or anger, or the company and example of others, or whatever elſe, and then if ever thou mean to forſake the ſin, forſake thoſe occaſions of it.

Reverence of God.

13. Fourthly, Endeavour to poſſeſs thy heart with a continual Reverence of God, and if that once grow into a cuſtom with thee, it will quickly turn out that contrary one of prophaning. Uſe and accuſtom thy ſelf therefore to this reverence of God, and particularly to ſuch a reſpect to his Name, as, if it be poſſible, never to mention it without ſome lifting up of thy heart to him. Even in thy ordinary diſcourſe, when ever thou takeſt his Name into thy mouth, let it be an occaſion of raiſing up thy thoughts to him. But by no means permit thy ſelf to uſe it in idle by-words, or the like. If thou doſt accuſtom thy ſelf to pay this reverence to the bare mention of his Name, it will be an excellent fence againſt the prophaning it in oaths.

Watchfulneſs.

14. A fifth means is a diligent and conſtant watch over thy ſelf, that thou thus *offend not with thy tongue*, without which all the former will come to nothing. And the laſt means is Prayer, which muſt be added to all thy endeavours; therefore pray earneſtly, that God will enable thee to overcome this wicked cuſtom; ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Set a watch, O Lord, over my mouth, and keep the door of my lips*; and if thou doſt ſincerely ſet thy ſelf to the uſe of means for it, thou mayeſt be aſſured, God will not be wanting in his aſſiſtance. I have been the longer on this, becauſe it is ſo reigning a ſin. God in his mercy give all that are guilty of it a true ſight of the hainouſneſs of it.

Prayer.

What it is to honour Gods Name.

15. By theſe ſeveral ways of diſhonouring Gods Name you may underſtand what is the duty of honouring it, *viz.* A ſtrict abſtaining from every one of theſe, and that abſtinence founded on an awful reſpect and reverence to that ſacred Name which is Great, Wonderful and Holy, *Pſal.* 99. 3. I have now paſt through the ſeveral branches of that great Duty of Honouring of God.

SUNDAY V.

Of worſhip due to Gods Name. Of Prayer and its ſeveral parts. Of publick Prayers in the Church, in the Family. Of Private Prayer. Of Repentance, &c. Of Faſting.

Worſhip. *Sect.* 1. THE Eight Duty we owe to God is WORSHIP; this is that Great Duty by which eſpecially we acknowledge his God-head, worſhip being proper only to God, and therefore it is to be lookt on as a moſt weighty duty. This is to be performed, firſt, by our Souls, ſecondly, *Prayer, its parts.* by our Bodies: the Souls part is Praying. Now prayer is a ſpeaking to God, and there are divers parts of it, according to the different things about which we ſpeak.

Confeſſion. 2. As firſt, there is Confeſſion, that is, the acknowledging our ſins to God. And this may be either general or particular; the general is when we only confeſs in groſs, that we are ſinful; the particular, when we mention the ſeveral ſorts and acts of our ſins. The former is neceſſary to be always a part of our ſolemn prayers, whether publick or private. The latter is proper for private prayer, and there the oftner it is uſed the better; yea, even in our daily private prayer it will be fit conſtantly to remember ſome of our greateſt and fouleſt ſins, though never ſo long ſince paſt. For ſuch we ſhould never think ſufficiently confeſt and bewailed. And this bewailing muſt always go along with confeſſion; we muſt be heartily ſorry for the ſins we confeſs, and from our ſouls acknowledge our own great unworthineſs in having committed them. For our confeſſion is not intended to inſtruct God, who knows our ſins much better than our ſelves do, but it is to humble our ſelves, and therefore we muſt not think to have confeſt aright till that be done.

Petition. 3. The ſecond part of prayer is Petition, that is, the begging of God what-
For our Souls. ſoever we want either for our Souls or Bodies. For our Souls we muſt firſt beg pardon of ſins, and that for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhed his bloud to obtain it. Then we muſt alſo beg the grace and aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit to enable us to forſake our ſins and to walk in obedience to him. And herein it will be needful particularly to beg all the ſeveral vertues, as Faith, Love, Zeal, Purity, Repentance, and the like, but eſpecially thoſe which thou moſt wanteſt: and therefore obſerve what thy wants are, and if thou beeſt proud, be moſt inſtant in praying for Humility; if luſtful, for Chaſtity, and ſo for all other Graces, according as thou findeſt thy needs. And in all theſe things that concern thy Soul, be very earneſt and importunate; take no denial from God, nor give over, though thou do not preſently obtain what thou ſueſt for. But if thou haſt never ſo long prayed for a grace, and yet findeſt it not, do not grow weary of praying, but rather ſearch what the cauſe may be which makes thy prayers ſo ineffectual; ſee if thou do not thy ſelf hinder them; perhaps thou prayeſt to God to enable thee to conquer ſome ſin, and yet never goeſt about to fight againſt it, never makeſt any reſiſtance, but yieldeſt to it as often as it comes, nay, putteſt thy ſelf in its way, in the road of all temptations. If it be thus, no wonder though thy prayers avail not, for thou wilt not let them. Therefore amend this, and ſet to the doing of thy part ſincerely, and then thou needeſt not fear but God will do his.

Bodies. 4. Secondly, We are to petition alſo for our bodies; that is, we are to ask of God ſuch neceſſaries of life as are needful for us, while we live here. But theſe only in ſuch a degree and meaſure, as his wiſdom ſees beſt for us: we muſt not preſume to be our own carvers, and pray for all that wealth,

wealth, or greatneſs, which our own vain hearts may perhaps deſire, but only for ſuch a condition, in reſpect of outward things, as he ſees may moſt tend to thoſe great ends of our living here, the glorifying him, and the ſaving of our own Souls.

5. A Third part of Prayer is Deprecation, that is, when we pray to God to turn away ſome evil from us. Now the evil may be either the evil of ſin, or the evil of puniſhment. The evil of Sin is that we are eſpecially to pray againſt, moſt earneſtly begging of God, that he will by the power of his grace, preſerve us from falling into ſin. And whatever ſins they are, to which thou knoweſt thy ſelf moſt inclined, there be particularly earneſt with God to preſerve thee from them. This is to be done daily, but then more eſpecially, when we are under any preſent temptation, and in danger of falling into any ſin: in which caſe we have reaſon to cry out as S. *Peter* did when he found himſelf ſinking, *Save Lord, or I periſh*; humbly beſeeching him either to withdraw the temptation, or ſtrengthen us to withſtand it, neither of which we can do for our ſelves. *Deprecation.* *of Sin.*

6. Secondly, We are likewiſe to pray againſt the evil of puniſhment, but principally againſt Spiritual puniſhments, as the anger of God, the withdrawing of his Grace, and Eternal damnation. Againſt theſe we can never pray with too much earneſtneſs. But we may alſo pray againſt temporal puniſhments, that is, any outward affliction, but this with ſubmiſſion to Gods will, according to the example of Chriſt, *Matth. 26. 39. Not as I will but as thou wilt.* *Of puniſhment.*

7. A fourth part of prayer is Interceſſion, that is, praying for others. This in general we are to do for all mankind, as well ſtrangers as acquaintance, but more particularly, thoſe to whom we have any eſpecial Relation, either publick, as our Governours both in Church and State, or private, as Parents, Husbands, Wife, Children, Friends, *&c.* We are alſo to pray for all that are in affliction, and ſuch particular perſons as we diſcern eſpecially to be ſo: Yea, we are to pray for thoſe that have done us injury, thoſe *that deſpitefully uſe and perſecute us*, for it is expreſly the command of Chriſt *Matt.* 5. 44. and that whereof he hath likewiſe given us the higheſt example, in praying even for his very crucifiers, *Luke* 23. 34. *Father, Forgive them.* For all theſe ſorts of perſons we are to pray, and that for the very ſame good things we beg of God for our ſelves, that God would give them in their ſeveral places and callings all ſpiritual and temporal bleſſings which he ſees wanting to them, and turn away from them all evil, whether of ſin or puniſhment. *Interceſſion.*

8. The fifth part of prayer is Thankſgiving; that is, the Praiſing and Bleſſing God for all his mercies, whether to our own perſons, and thoſe that immediately relate to us, or to the Church and Nation whereof we are members, or yet more general to all mankind; and this for all his mercies both ſpiritual and temporal. In the Spiritual, firſt, for thoſe wherein we are all in common concerned, as the giving of his Son, the ſending of his Spirit, and all thoſe means he hath uſed to bring ſinful men unto himſelf. Then ſecondly, for thoſe mercies we have in our own particulars received, ſuch are the having been born within the pale of the Church, and ſo brought up in Chriſtian Religion, by which we have been partakers of thoſe precious advantages of the Word and Sacraments, and ſo have had, without any care or pains of ours, the means of eternal life put into our hands. But beſides theſe, there is none of us but have received other ſpiritual mercies from God. *Thankſgiving.*

9. As firſt, Gods patience and long-ſuffering, waiting for our Repentance, *Spiritual Mercies.*

tance, and not cutting us off in our Sins. Secondly, his calls and invitations of us to that repentance, not only outward, in the miniſtry of the Word, but alſo inward, by the motions of his Spirit. But then if thou be one that hath by the help of Gods grace been wrought upon by theſe calls, and brought from a prophane or worldly, to a Chriſtian courſe of life, thou art ſurely in the higheſt degree tied to magnifie and praiſe his goodneſs, as having received from him the greateſt of mercies.

Temporal. 10. We are likewiſe to give thanks for Temporal bleſſings, whether ſuch as concern the publick, as the proſperity of the Church or Nation, and all remarkable deliverances afforded to either; or elſe ſuch as concern our particular; ſuch are all the good things of this life which we enjoy; as Health, Friends, Food, Raiment, and the like; alſo for thoſe minutely preſervations, whereby we are by Gods Gracious providence kept from danger, and the eſpecial deliverances which God hath given us in the time of greateſt perils. It will be impoſſible to ſet down the ſeveral mercies which every man receives from God, becauſe they differ in kind and degree between one man and another. But it is ſure that he which receives leaſt, hath yet enough to employ his whole life in praiſes to God. And it will be very fit for every man to conſider the ſeveral paſſages of his life, and the mercies he hath in each received, and ſo to gather a kind of Liſt or Catalogue of them, at leaſt the principal of them, which he may always have in his memory, and often with a thankful heart repeat before God.

Publick Prayers in the Church. 11. Theſe are the ſeveral parts of Prayer, and all of them to be uſed both publickly and privately. The publick uſe of them is firſt, that in the Church, where all meet to joyn in thoſe prayers wherein they are in common concerned. And in this (where the prayers are ſuch as they ought to be) we ſhould be very conſtant, there being an eſpecial bleſſing promiſed to the joynt requeſts of the faithful; and he that without a neceſſary cauſe abſents himſelf from ſuch publick prayers, cuts himſelf off from the Church, which hath always been thought ſo unhappy a thing, that it is the greateſt puniſhment the Governours of the Church can lay upon the worſt offender; and therefore it is a ſtrange madneſs for men to inflict it upon themſelves.

In the Family. 12. A ſecond ſort of publick prayer is that in a Family, where all that are members of it joyn in their common ſupplications; and this alſo ought to be very carefully attended to, firſt by the Maſter of the Family, who is to look that there be ſuch prayers, it being as much his part thus to provide for the Souls of his Children and Servants, as to provide food for their Bodies. Therefore there is none even the meaneſt houſholder, but ought to take this care. If either himſelf or any of his Family can read, he may uſe ſome prayers out of ſome good Book; if it be the Service-Book of the Church, he makes a good choice: if they cannot read, it will then be neceſſary they ſhould be taught without Book ſome form of prayer which they may uſe in the Family, for which purpoſe again ſome of the Prayers of the Church will be very fit, as being moſt eaſie for their memories by reaſon of their ſhortneſs, and yet containing a great deal of matter. But what choice ſoever they make of prayers, let them be ſure to have ſome, and let no man that profeſſes himſelf a Chriſtian, keep ſo heatheniſh a family, as not to ſee God be daily worſhipped in it. But when the Maſter of a Family hath done his duty in this providing, it is the duty of every member of it to make uſe of that proviſion, by being conſtant and diligent at thoſe Family-Prayers.

13. Private

13. Private or ſecret Prayer is that which is uſed by a man alone apart from all others, wherein we are to be more particular according to our particular needs, than in publick it is fit to be. And this of private prayer is a duty which will not be excuſed by the performance of the other of publick. They are both required, and one muſt not be taken in exchange for the other. And whoever is diligent in publick prayers, and yet negligent in private, it is much to be feared he rather ſeeks to approve himſelf to men than to God, contrary to the command of our Saviour, *Mat.* 6. who enjoyns this private prayer, this *praying to our Father in ſecret*, from whom alone we are to expect our reward, and not from the vain praiſes of men. *Private Prayer.*

14. Now this duty of Prayer is to be often performed, by none ſeldomer than Evening and Morning, it being moſt neceſſary that we ſhould thus begin and end all our works with God, and that not only in reſpect of the duty we owe him, but alſo in reſpect of our ſelves who can never be either proſperous or ſafe, but by committing our ſelves to him; and therefore ſhould tremble to venture on the perils either of day or night without his ſafeguard. How much oftner this duty is to be performed, muſt be judged according to the buſineſs or leiſure men have: Where, by buſineſs, I mean not ſuch buſineſs as men unprofitably make to themſelves, but the neceſſary buſineſs of a mans Calling, which with ſome will not afford them much time for ſet and ſolemn Prayer. But even theſe men may often in a day lift up their hearts to God in ſome ſhort prayers even whilſt they are at their work. As for thoſe that have more leiſure, they are in all reaſon to beſtow more time upon this duty. And let no man that can find time to beſtow upon his vanities, nay, perhaps his ſins, ſay he wants leiſure for Prayer, but let him now endeavour to redeem what he hath miſ-ſpent, by imploying more of that leiſure in this duty for the future: And ſurely if we did but rightly weigh how much it is our own advantage to perform this duty, we ſhould think it wiſdom to be as frequent as we are ordinarily ſeldom in it. *Frequency in Prayer.* *The advantages of Prayer.*

15. For firſt, it is a great Honour for us poor worms of the earth to be allowed to ſpeak ſo freely to the Majeſty of Heaven. If a King ſhould but vouchſafe to let one of his meaneſt Subjects talk familiarly and freely with him, it would be lookt on as a huge honour; that man how deſpicable ſoever he were before, would then be the envy of all his neighbours; and there is little queſtion he would be willing to take all opportunities of receiving ſo great a grace. But alas! this is nothing to the honour is offered us, who are allowed, nay invited to ſpeak to, and converſe with the King of Kings, and therefore how forward ſhould we in all reaſon be to it? *Honour.*

16. Secondly, It is a great Benefit, even the greateſt that can be imagined; for Prayer is the inſtrument of fetching down all good things to us, whether ſpiritual or temporal; no prayer, that is qualified as it ought to be, but is ſure to bring down a bleſſing according to that of the Wiſe man, *Eccluſ.* 35. 17. *The prayer of the humble pierceth the clouds, and will not turn away till the higheſt regard it.* You would think him a happy man that had one certain means of helping him to whatever he wanted, though it were to coſt him much pains and labour; now this happy man thou mayeſt be if thou wilt. Prayer is the never-failing means of bringing thee, if not all that thou thinkeſt thou wanteſt, yet all that indeed thou doeſt, that is, all that God ſees fit for thee. And therefore be there never ſo much wearineſs to thy fleſh in the duty, yet conſidering in what continual want *Benefits.*

thou

thou ſtandeſt of ſomething or other from God, it is a madneſs to let that uneaſineſs diſhearten thee, and keep thee from this ſo ſure means of ſupplying thy wants.

Pleaſantneſs. 17. But in the third place, this duty is in it ſelf ſo far from being uneaſie, that it is very pleaſant. God is the fountain of happineſs, *and at his right hand are pleaſures for evermore*, *Pſal.* 16. 11. And therefore the nearer we draw to him, the happier we muſt needs be, the very joys of Heaven ariſing from our nearneſs to God. Now in this life we have no way of drawing ſo near to him as by this of Prayer, and therefore ſurely it is that which in it ſelf is apt to afford abundance of delight and pleaſure; If it ſeem otherwiſe to us, it is from ſome diſtemper of our own hearts, which like a ſick palate cannot reliſh the moſt pleaſant meat. Prayer is a pleaſant duty, but it is withal a ſpiritual one; and therefore if thy heart be carnal; if that be ſet either on the contrary pleaſures of the fleſh, or droſs of the world: No marvel then, if thou taſte no pleaſantneſs in it, if like the *Iſraelites*, thou deſpiſe Manna whilſt thou longeſt after the fleſh-pots of *Egypt*. Therefore if thou find a wearineſs in this duty, ſuſpect thy ſelf, purge and refine thy heart from the love of all ſin, and endeavour to put it into a heavenly and ſpiritual frame, and then thou wilt find this no unpleaſant exerciſe, but full of delight and ſatisfaction. In the mean time complain not of the hardneſs of the duty, but of the untowardneſs of thy own heart.

Carnality one reaſon of its ſeeming otherwiſe.

Want of uſe another. 18. But there may alſo be another reaſon of its ſeeming unpleaſant to us, and that is want of uſe. You know there are many things, which ſeem uneaſie at the firſt trial, which yet after we are accuſtomed to them ſeem very delightful, and if this be thy caſe, then thou knoweſt a ready cure, *viz.* to uſe it oftener, and ſo this conſideration naturally inforces the exhortation of being frequent in this duty.

To ask nothing unlawful. 19. But we are not only to conſider how often, but how well we perform it. Now to do it well, we are to reſpect, firſt the matter of our Prayers, to look that we ask nothing that is unlawful, as revenge upon our enemies, or the like; ſecondly, the manner; and that muſt be firſt in

To ask in Faith. Faith; we muſt believe, that if we ask as we ought, God will either give us the thing we ask for, or elſe ſomething which he ſees better for us.

In humility. And then ſecondly, in humility, we muſt acknowledge our ſelves utterly unworthy of any of thoſe good things we beg for, and therefore ſue for

With attention. them only for Chriſts ſake; thirdly, with attention, we muſt mind what we are about, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be carried away to the thought of other things. I told you at the firſt, that prayer was the buſineſs of the Soul, but if our minds be wandring, it is the work only of the tongue and lips, which makes it in Gods account no better than vain babling, and ſo will never bring a bleſſing on us. Nay, as *Jacob* ſaid to his mother, *Gen.* 27. 12. It will be more likely to bring a curſe on us than a bleſſing, for it is a profaning one of the moſt ſolemn parts of Gods ſervice, it is a piece of Hypocriſie, the *drawing near to him with our lips, when our hearts are far from him*, and a great ſlighting and deſpiſing that dreadful Majeſty we come before: And as to our ſelves it is a moſt ridiculous folly, that we who come to God upon ſuch weighty errands, as are all the concernments of our Souls and Bodies, ſhould in the midſt forget our buſineſs, and purſue every the lighteſt thing that either our own vain fancies or the Devil, whoſe buſineſs it is here to hinder us, can offer to us. It is juſt as if a Malefactor, that comes to ſue for his life to the King, ſhould in the midſt of his ſupplication happen to eſpy a butter-fly, and then ſhould leave his ſuit,

and

and run a chaſe after that butter-fly: Would you not think it pity, a pardon ſhould be caſt away upon ſo wretchleſs a creature? and ſure it will be as unreaſonable to expect that God ſhould attend and grant thoſe ſuits of ours, which we do not at all conſider our ſelves.

20. This wandring in Prayer is a thing we are much concerned to arm our ſelves againſt, it being that to which we are naturally wonderful prone. To that end it will be neceſſary firſt to poſſeſs our hearts at our coming to Prayers with the greatneſs of that Majeſty we are to approach, that ſo we may dread to be vain and trifling in his preſence. Secondly, We are to conſider the great concernment of the things we are to ask, ſome whereof are ſuch that if we ſhould not be heard, we were of all creatures the moſt miſerable, and yet this wandring is the way to keep us from being heard. Thirdly, we are to beg Gods aid in this particular: And therefore when thou ſetteſt to prayer, let thy firſt petition be for this grace of attention. *Helps againſt wandring.* *Conſideration of Gods Majeſty.* *Our needs.* *Prayer for Gods aid.*

21. Laſtly, be as watchful as is poſſible over thy heart in time of prayer to keep out all wandring thoughts, or, if any have gotten in, let them not find entertainment, but as ſoon as ever thou diſcerneſt them, ſuffer them not to abide one moment, but caſt them out with indignation, and beg Gods pardon for them. And if thou doſt thus ſincerely and diligently ſtrive againſt them, either God will enable thee in ſome meaſure to overcome, or he will in his mercy pardon thee what thou canſt not prevent: But if it be through thy own negligence, thou art to expect neither, ſo long as that negligence continues. *Watchfulneſs.*

22. In the fourth place, we muſt look our Prayers be with zeal and earneſtneſs; it is not enough that we ſo far attend them as barely to know what it is we ſay; but we muſt put forth all the affection and devotion of our Souls, and that according to the ſeveral parts of prayer before mentioned. It is not the cold, faint requeſt that will ever obtain from God; we ſee it will not from our ſelves; for if a beggar ſhould ask relief from us, and do it in ſuch a ſcornful manner that he ſeemed indifferent whether he had it or no, we ſhould think he had either little want, or great pride; and ſo have no heart to give him. Now ſurely the things we ask from God are ſo much above the rate of an ordinary Alms, that we can never expect they ſhould be given to ſlight and heartleſs petitions. No more in like manner will our Sacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving ever be accepted by him, if it be not offered from a heart truly affected with the ſenſe of his mercies; it's but a kind of formal complementing, which will never be approved by him who requires the heart, and not the lips only. And the like may be ſaid of all the other parts of Prayer. Therefore be careful when thou draweſt nigh to God in Prayer, to raiſe up thy Soul to the higheſt pitch of zeal and earneſtneſs thou art able. And becauſe of thy ſelf alone thou art not able to do any thing, beſeech God that he will inflame thy heart with this heavenly fire of Devotion, and when thou haſt obtained it, beware that thou neither quench it by any wilful ſin, nor let it go out again for want of ſtirring it up and imploying it. *With Zeal.*

23. Fifthly, we muſt Pray with Purity, I mean, we muſt purge our hearts from all affections to ſin. This is ſurely the meaning of the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. when he commands men to *lift up holy hands in Prayer*, and he there inſtances in one ſpecial ſort of ſin, wrath and doubting, where by doubting is meant thoſe unkind diſputes and contentions which are ſo common amongſt men. And ſurely he that cheriſhes that or any other ſin in his heart, can never lift up thoſe holy hands which are required in this duty. *With purity.*

ty. And then ſure his prayers, be they never ſo many or earneſt, will little avail him. The Pſalmiſt will tell him, he ſhall not be heard, *Pſalm 66.* 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Nay, *Solomon* will tell him yet worſe, that his prayers are not only vain, but abominable, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* And thus to have our prayers turned into ſin, is one of the heavieſt things that can befal any man. We ſee it is ſet down in that ſad Catalogue of curſes, *Pſalm* 109. 7. Therefore let us not be ſo cruel to our ſelves as to pull it upon our own heads, which we certainly do if we offer up prayers from an impure heart.

To right ends. 24. In the laſt place, we muſt direct our prayers to right ends; and that either in reſpect of the prayer it ſelf, or the things we pray for; Firſt, we muſt pray, not to gain the praiſe of devotion amongſt men, like thoſe hypocrites, *Matth.* 6. 5. nor yet only for company or faſhion-ſake, to do as others do: But we muſt do it, firſt, as an act of worſhip to God; ſecondly, as an acknowledgment, that he is that great ſpring from whence alone we expect all good things; and thirdly, to gain a ſupply of our own or others needs. Then in reſpect of the Things prayed for; we muſt be ſure to have no ill aims upon them; we muſt not ask that we *may conſume it upon our luſts*, *Jam.* 4. 3. as thoſe do who pray for wealth, that they may live in riot and exceſs, and for power that they may be able to miſchief their enemies, and the like. But our end in all muſt be Gods glory firſt, and next that, our own and others Salvation; and all other things muſt be taken in only as they tend to thoſe, which they can never do if we abuſe them to ſin. I have now done with that firſt part of worſhip, that of the Soul.

Bodily worſhip. 25. The other is that of the Body, and that is nothing elſe but ſuch humble and reverent geſtures in our approaches to God, as may both expreſs the inward reverence of our Souls, and may alſo pay him ſome tribute from our very Bodies, with which the Apoſtle commands us to glorifie God, as well as with our Souls; and good reaſon, ſince he hath created and redeemed the one as well as the other: Whenſoever therefore thou offereſt thy Prayers unto God, let it be with all lowlineſs as well of body as of mind, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 95. 6. *O come let us worſhip, let us fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

Repentance 26. The ninth DUTY to God is REPENTANCE: That this is a Duty to God we are taught by the Apoſtle, *Acts* 20. 21. where ſpeaking of Repentance, he ſtiles it repentance towards God. And there is good reaſon this ſhould be a Duty to him, ſince there is no ſin we commit but is either mediately or immediately againſt him. For though there be ſins both againſt our ſelves and our neighbours, yet they being forbidden by God, they are alſo breaches of his Commandments, and ſo ſins againſt him.

A turning from ſin to God. This Repentance is, in ſhort, nothing but a turning from ſin to God, the caſting off all our former evils, and in ſtead thereof conſtantly practiſing all thoſe Chriſtian duties which God requireth of us. And this is ſo neceſſary a duty, that without it we certainly periſh; we have Chriſt's word for it, *Luke* 13. 5. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

Times for this duty. 27. The Directions for performing the ſeveral parts of this duty have been already given in the preparation to the Lord's Supper. And thither I refer the Reader. Only I ſhall here mind him, that it is not to be lookt upon as a Duty to be practiſed only at the time of receiving the Sacrament. For this being the only remedy againſt the poiſon of ſin, we muſt renew

renew it as often as we repeat our ſins, that is, daily. I mean we muſt every day repent of the ſins of that day. For what Chriſt ſaith of other evils, is true alſo of this, *Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof*; we have ſins enough of each day to exerciſe a daily repentance; and therefore every man muſt thus daily call himſelf to account. *Daily.*

28. But as it is in accounts, they who conſtantly ſet down their daily expences, have yet ſome ſet time of caſting up the whole ſum, as at the end of the week or month; ſo ſhould it alſo be here, we ſhould ſet aſide ſome time to humble our ſelves ſolemnly before God for the ſins, not of that day only but of our whole lives. And the frequenter theſe times are, the better. For the oftner we thus caſt up our accounts with God, and ſee what vaſt debts we are run in to him, the more humbly ſhall we think of our ſelves, and the more ſhall thirſt after his mercy, which two are the ſpecial things that muſt qualifie us for his pardon. He therefore that can aſſign himſelf one day in the Week for this purpoſe, will take a thriving courſe for his Soul. Or if any mans ſtate of life be ſo buſie as not to afford him to do it ſo often, let him yet come as near to that frequency as is poſſible for him, remembring always, that none of his worldly imployments can bring him in near ſo gainful a return as this ſpiritual one will do, and therefore it is very ill husbandry to purſue them to the neglect of this. *At ſet times.*

29. Beſides theſe conſtant times, there are likewiſe occaſional times for the performance of this duty; ſuch eſpecially are the times of calamity and affliction; for when any ſuch befals us, we are to look on it as a meſſage ſent from Heaven to call us to this duty, and therefore muſt never neglect it when we are thus ſummoned to it, leſt we be of the number of them who *deſpiſe the chaſtiſements of the Lord*, *Heb.* 12. 5. *In the time of affliction.*

30. There is yet another time of repentance, which in the practice of men hath gotten away the cuſtom from all thoſe, and that is the time of death, which it is true, is a time very fit to renew our repentance, but ſure not proper to begin it; and it is a moſt deſperate madneſs for men to defer it till then. For to ſay the mildeſt of it, it is the venturing our Souls upon ſuch miſerable uncertainties as no wiſe man would truſt with any thing of the leaſt value. *At death.*

For firſt, I would ask any man that means to repent at his death, how he knows he ſhall have an hours time for it? Do we not daily ſee men ſnatcht away in a moment? And who can tell that it ſhall not be his own caſe? But ſecondly, ſuppoſe he have a more leiſurely death, that ſome diſeaſe give him warning of its approach, yet perhaps he will not underſtand that warning, but will ſtill flatter himſelf, as very often ſick people do, with hopes of life to the laſt: and ſo his death may be ſudden to him, though it comes by never ſo ſlow degrees. But again, thirdly, if he do diſcern his danger, yet how is he ſure he ſhall then be able to repent? Repentance is a grace of God, not at our command; and it is juſt and uſual with God, when Men have a long time refuſed and rejected that grace, reſiſted all his calls and invitations to converſion and amendment, to give them over at laſt to the hardneſs of their own hearts, and not to afford them any more of that grace they have ſo deſpiſed. Yet ſuppoſe in the fourth place that God in his infinite patience ſhould ſtill continue the offer of that grace to thee, yet thou that haſt reſiſted, it may be thirty, or forty, or fifty years together, how knoweſt thou that thou ſhalt put off that habit of reſiſtance upon a ſudden, and make uſe of the grace afforded? It is ſure thou haſt many *The danger of deferring it till then.* *The diſadvantages of a death-bed repentance.*

more advantages towards the doing it now, than thou wilt have then.

The custom of sin. 31. For first, the longer sin hath kept possession of the heart, the harder it will be to drive it out. It is true, if repentance were nothing but a present ceasing from the acts of sin, the death-bed were fittest for it, for then we are disabled from committing most sins; but I have formerly shewed you, repentance contains much more than so, there must be in it a sincere hatred of sin, and love of God. Now how unlikely is it that he which hath all his life loved sin, cherisht it in his bosom, and on the contrary abhorred God and goodness, should in an instant quite change his affections, hate that sin he loved, and love God and goodness, which before he utterly hated?

Bodily pains. 32. And secondly, the bodily pains that attend a Death-bed will distract thee, and make thee unable to attend the work of repentance, which is a business of such weight and difficulty, as will employ all our powers even when they are at the freshest.

Danger of unsincerity. 33. Consider those disadvantages thou must then struggle with, and then tell me what hope there is thou shalt then do that, which now upon much easier terms thou wilt not. But in the third place there is a danger behind beyond all these, and that is that the repentance which death drives a man to, will not be a true repentance; for in such a case it is plain, it is only the fear of Hell puts him on it, which though it may be a good beginning, where there is time after to perfect it, yet where it goes alone it can never avail for Salvation. Now that Death-bed repentances are often only of this sort, is too likely, when it is observed that many Men who have seemed to repent when they have thought Death approaching, have yet, after it hath pleased God to restore them to health, been as wicked (perhaps worse) as ever they were before; which shews plainly that there was no real change in them, and then surely had such a man died in that seeming repentance, God, *who tries the heart*, would not have accepted it, which he saw was unsincere. When all these dangers are laid together, it will surely appear a most desperate adventure for any man to trust to a Death-bed repentance. Nor is it ever the less for that example of the penitent Thief, *Luke* 23. 43. which is by many so much depended on. For it is sure his case and ours differ widely; he had never heard of Christ before, and so more could not be expected of him than to embrace him as soon as he was tendred to him: But we have had him offered, nay prest upon us from our Cradles, and yet have rejected him. But if there were not this difference, it is but a faint hope can be raised only from a single example, and another we find not in the whole Bible. The *Israelites* we read were *fed with Manna from Heaven*, but would you not think him stark mad that should out of expectation of the like, neglect to provide himself any food? Yet it is full as reasonable to depend upon this example as the other. I conclude all in the words of the Wise man, *Eccl.* 12. 1. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth before the evil days come.*

Fasting. 34. To this duty of repentance, Fasting is very proper to be annexed. The Scripture usually joyns them together; among the *Jews* the great day of atonement was to be kept with Fasting, as you may see by comparing *Lev.* 16. 31. with *Isa.* 58. 5. and this by Gods especial appointment. And in the Prophets when the people are called on to repent and humble themselves, they are also called on to Fast. Thus it is, *Joel* 2. 12. *Therefore now thus saith the Lord, Turn ye unto me with all your hearts, with fasting, and with weeping, &c.* Yea, so proper hath fasting been accounted to Humiliation, that we see even wicked *Ahab* would not omit it in his, 2 *Kings* 21. 27. nor the Heathen *Ninevites* in theirs, *Jonah* 3. 5. nor is it less fit or less acceptable

table since Christ, than it was before him. For we see he supposes it as a duty sometimes to be performed, when he gives directions to avoid vainglory in it, *Matth.* 6. 6. and also assures us that if it be performed, as it ought, not to please men but God, it will surely be rewarded by him. And accordingly we find it practised by the Saints, *Anna*, *Luke* 2. 37. *served God with fasting and prayer*: Where it is observable, that it is reckoned as a service of God, fit to be joyned with Prayers. And the Christians of the first times were generally very frequent in the practice of it. Now though fasting be especially proper to a time of humiliation, yet is it not so restrained to it, but it may be seasonable, whensoever we have any extraordinary thing to request from God. Thus when *Esther* was to endeavour the deliverance of her people from destruction, she and all the *Jews* kept a solemn Fast, *Esth.* 4. 16. And thus when *Paul* and *Barnabas* were to be Ordained Apostles, there was fasting joyned to prayer, *Acts* 13. 3. and so it will be very fit for us, whensoever we have need of any extraordinary directions, or assistance from God, whether concerning our temporal or spiritual concernments, thus to quicken our prayers by Fasting. But above all occasions, This of Humiliation seems most to require it; for besides the advantages of kindling our zeal, which is never more necessary than when we beg for pardon of sins, Fasting carries in it somewhat of revenge, which is reckoned as a special part of repentance, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. for by denying our bodies the refreshment of our ordinary food, we do inflict somewhat of punishment upon our selves for our former excesses, or whatever other sins we at that time accuse our selves of; which is a proper effect of that indignation which every sinner ought to have against himself. And truly he that is so tender of himself that he can never find in his heart so much as to miss a meal, by way of punishment for his faults, shews he is not much fallen out with himself, for committing them; and so wants that indignation which the Apostle in the forenamed Texts mentions as a part of true repentance.

Fasting a revenge upon our selves.

35. There is no doubt, but such holy revenges upon our selves for sins are very acceptable to God; yet we must not think that either those, or any thing else we can do, can make satisfaction for our offences, for that nothing but the bloud of Christ can do. And therefore on that, and not on any of our performances we must depend for pardon. Yet since that bloud shall never be applied to any but penitent sinners, we are as much concern'd to bring forth all the fruits of repentance as if our hopes depended on them only.

Such revenges acceptable with God. Yet no satisfaction for sins.

36. How often this duty of fasting is to be performed, we have no direction in Scripture. That must be allotted by mens own piety, according as their health, or other considerations will allow. But as it is in humiliation, the frequenter returns we have of set times for it, the better; so it is likewise in fasting, the oftner, the better, so it be not hurtful either to our healths, or to some other duty required of us. Nay perhaps fasting may help some Men to more of those times for humiliation, than they would otherwise gain. For perhaps there are some, who cannot, without a manifest hindrance to their calling allow a whole day to that work, yet such an one may at least afford that time he would otherwise spend in eating: And so fasting will be doubly useful towards such a Man's humiliation, both by helping him in the duty, and gaining him time for it.

Times of fasting.

37. I have now gone through the first branch of our Duty to God, to wit, the acknowledging him for our God. The Second is, the having no other. Of which I need say little, as it is a forbidding of that grosser sort

Second Branch our dut God.

of Heatheniſh Idolatry, the worſhipping of Idols, which though it were once common in the World, yet is now ſo rare, that it is not likely any that ſhall read this will be concerned in it. Only I muſt ſay, That to pay Divine Worſhip to any creature, be it Saint or Angel, yea, or the Image of Chriſt himſelf, is a tranſgreſſion againſt this ſecond branch of our duty to God, it being the imparting that to a creature which is due only to God, and therefore is ſtrictly to be abſtained from.

Inward Idolatry. 38. But there is another ſort of Idolatry of which we are generally guilty, and that is, when we pay thoſe affections of Love, Fear, Truſt, and the like, to any creature in a higher degree than we do to God: For that is the ſetting up that thing, whatſoever it is, for our God. And this inward kind of Idolatry is that which provokes God to jealouſie, as well as the outward of worſhipping an Idol. I might enlarge much upon this, but becauſe ſome ſeverals of it have been toucht on in the former diſcourſe, I ſuppoſe it needleſs; and therefore ſhall now proceed to the ſecond Head of DUTY, that to our SELVES.

SUNDAY VI.

Duty to our Selves; of Sobriety; of Humility; the great Sin of Pride; of Vain-Glory, the Danger, Folly; the Means to prevent it: Of Meekneſs, &c.

Duty to our Selves. *Sect.* 1. THIS DUTY to our SELVES is by S. *Paul* in the forementioned Text, *Tit.* 2. 12. ſumm'd up in this one word Soberly. Now by Soberly is meant our keeping within thoſe due bounds which God hath ſet us. My buſineſs will therefore be to tell you what are the particulars of this Sobriety: And that firſt, in reſpect of the Soul; ſecondly, in reſpect of the Body. The ſobriety of the Soul ſtands in right governing its paſſions and affections; and to that are many Vertues required. I ſhall give you the particulars of them.

Humility. 2. The firſt of them is Humility, which may well have the prime Place, not only in reſpect of the excellency of the vertue, but alſo of its uſefulneſs towards the obtaining of all the reſt. This being the foundation on which all others muſt be built. And he that hopes to gain them without this, will prove but like that fooliſh builder Chriſt ſpeaks of, *Luke* 6. 49. *Who built his houſe on the ſand.* Of the humility towards God I have already ſpoken, and ſhewed the neceſſity of it, I am now to ſpeak of Humility, as it concerns our ſelves, which will be found no leſs neceſſary than the former.

3. This Humility is of two ſorts, the firſt is the having a mean and low opinion of our ſelves, the ſecond is the being content that others ſhould have ſo of us. The firſt of theſe is contrary to pride, the other to vainglory. And that both theſe are abſolutely neceſſary to Chriſtians, I am now to ſhew you; which will I conceive, beſt be done by laying before you firſt, the ſin; ſecondly, the danger; thirdly, the contrary Vices.

The great ſin of Pride. 4. And firſt, for Pride; the ſin of it is ſo great, that it caſt the Angels out of Heaven, and therefore if we may judge of ſin by the puniſhment, it was not only the firſt, but the greateſt ſin that ever the Devil himſelf hath been guilty of: But we need no better proof of the hainouſneſs of it, than the extreme hatefulneſs of it to God; which beſides that inſtance of his puniſhing the Devil, we may frequently find in the Scriptures, *Prov.* 16. 5. *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.* And again,

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Chap. 6. 16. where there is mention of ſeveral things the Lord hates, a proud look is ſet as the firſt of them; ſo *Jam.* 4. 7. *God reſiſteth the proud*; and divers other Texts there are to the ſame purpoſe, which ſhews the great hatred God bears to this ſin of Pride. Now ſince it is certain, God who is all goodneſs, hates nothing, but as it is evil, it muſt needs follow, that where God hates in ſo great a degree, there muſt be a great degree of evil.

The danger. Drawing into other ſins.

5. But ſecondly, PRIDE is not only very ſinful, but very dangerous; and that firſt, in reſpect of drawing us to other ſins; ſecondly, of betraying us to puniſhments. Firſt, pride draws us to other ſins, wherein it ſhews it ſelf indeed to be the direct contrary to humility; for as that is the root of all Vertue, ſo is this of all Vice. For he that is proud ſets himſelf up as his own God, and ſo can never ſubmit himſelf to any other Rules or Laws than what he makes to himſelf. The ungodly, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *is ſo proud that he careth not for God, Pſal.* 10. 4. where you ſee, it is his pride that makes him deſpiſe God. And when a man is once come to that, he is prepared for the commiſſion of all ſins. I might inſtance in a multitude of particular ſins that naturally flow from this of pride; as firſt Anger, which the Wiſe man ſets as the effect of Pride, *Prov.* 21. 24. calling it proud wrath; ſecondly, ſtrife and contention; which he again notes to be the off-ſpring of Pride, *Prov.* 30. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention.* And both theſe are indeed moſt natural effects of pride: For he that thinks very highly of himſelf, expects much ſubmiſſion and obſervance from others, and therefore cannot but rage and quarrel whenever he thinks it not ſufficiently paid. It would be infinite to mention all the fruits of this bitter root: I ſhall name but one more, and that is, that pride not only betrays us to many ſins, but alſo makes them incurable in us, for it hinders the working of all Remedies.

Fruſtrating of remedies.

6. Thoſe remedies muſt either come from God or man, if from God, they muſt be either in the way of meekneſs and gentleneſs, or elſe of ſharpneſs and puniſhment. Now if God by his goodneſs eſſay to lead a proud man to repentance, he quite miſtakes God's meaning, and thinks all the mercies he receives are but the reward of his own deſert, and ſo long 'tis ſure he will never think he needs repentance. But if on the other ſide God uſe him more ſharply, and lay afflictions and puniſhments upon him, thoſe in a proud heart work nothing but murmurings and hating of God, as if he did him injury in thoſe puniſhments. As for the remedies that can be uſed by man, they again muſt be either by way of correction or exhortation; corrections from man will ſure never work more on a proud heart, than thoſe from God, for he that can think God unjuſt in them, will much rather believe it of man. And exhortations will do as little. For let a proud man be admoniſhed though never ſo mildly and lovingly, he looks on it as a diſgrace. And therefore inſtead of confeſſing or amending the fault, he falls to reproaching his reprover as an over-buſie or cenſorious perſon, and for that greateſt and moſt precious act of kindneſs, looks on him as his enemy. And now one that thus ſtubbornly reſiſts all means of cure, muſt be concluded in a moſt dangerous eſtate.

Betraying to puniſhment.

7. But beſides this danger of ſin, I told you there was another, that of puniſhment; and of this there will need little proof, when it is conſidered, that God is the proud mans profeſt enemy, that he hates and reſiſts him, as appeared in the Texts forecited: And then there can be little doubt, that he which hath ſo mighty an adverſary ſhall be ſure to ſmart for it. Yet beſides this general ground of concluſion, it may not be amiſs to mention

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ſome of thoſe Texts which particularly threaten this ſin, as *Prov.* 16. 18. *Pride goeth before deſtruction, and an haughty ſpirit before a fall*: again, *Prov.* 16. 5. *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand joyn in hand, yet they ſhall not be unpuniſhed.* The decree it ſeems is unalterable, and whatever endeavours are uſed to preſerve the proud man, they are but vain, for he *ſhall not go unpuniſhed.* And this is very remarkable in the ſtory of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 4. who though a King, the greateſt in the world, yet for his pride was driven from among men to dwell and feed with beaſts. And it is moſt frequently ſeen, that this ſin meets with very extraordinary judgments even in this life. But if it ſhould not, let not the proud man think that he hath eſcaped Gods vengeance, for it is ſure there will be a moſt ſad reckoning in the next; for if God ſpared not the Angels for this ſin, but caſt them into Hell, let no Man hope to ſpeed better.

The Folly. 8. In the third place I am to ſhew you the great Folly of this ſin; and to do that, it will be neceſſary to conſider the ſeveral things whereof Men uſe to be proud; they are of three ſorts, either thoſe which we call the goods of Nature, or the goods of Fortune, or the goods of Grace.

In reſpect of the goods of Nature. 9. By the goods of Nature, I mean Beauty, Strength, Wit, and the like, and the being proud of any of theſe is a huge folly. For firſt, we are very apt to miſtake and think our ſelves handſome or wity when we are not, and then there cannot be a more Ridiculous folly than to be proud of what we have not, and ſuch every one eſteems it in another Man, though he never ſuppoſes it his own caſe; and ſo never diſcerns it in himſelf. And therefore there is nothing more deſpicable amongſt all men, than a proud fool; yet no man that entertains high opinions of his own wit but is in danger to be thus deceived, a mans own judgment of himſelf being of all others the leaſt to be truſted. But ſecondly, ſuppoſe we be not out in judging, yet what is there in any of theſe natural endowments which is worth the being proud, there being ſcarce any of them which ſome creature or other hath not in a greater degree than man? How much does the whiteneſs of the Lilly, and the redneſs of the Roſe exceed the white and red of the faireſt face? What a multitude of creatures is there, that far ſurpaſs Man in ſtrength and ſwiftneſs? And divers others there are, which, as far as concerns any uſeful ends of theirs, act much more wiſely than moſt of us; and are therefore oftentimes in Scripture propoſed to us by way of Example. It is therefore ſurely great unreaſonableneſs for us to think highly of our ſelves for ſuch things as are common to us with beaſts and plants. But thirdly, if they were as excellent as we fancy them, yet they are not at all durable, they are impaired and loſt by ſundry means; a phrenzy will deſtroy the rareſt wit; a ſickneſs decay the freſheſt beauty, the greateſt ſtrength, or however old age will be ſure to do all. And therefore to be proud of them is again a folly in this reſpect. But laſtly, whatever they are, we gave them not to our ſelves. No man can think he did any thing towards the procuring his natural beauty or wit, and ſo can with no reaſon value himſelf for them.

The goods of fortune. 10. In the ſecond place, the folly is as great to be proud of the goods of Fortune; by them I mean wealth and honour, and the like; for it is ſure, they add nothing of true worth to the man; ſomewhat of outward pomp and bravery they may help him to, but that makes no change in the Perſon. You may load an Aſs with Money, or deck him with rich Trappings, yet ſtill you will not make him a whit the nobler kind of beaſt by either of them. Then ſecondly, theſe are things we have no hold

hold of, they vaniſh many times ere we are aware; he that is rich to day, may be poor to morrow, and then will be the leſs pitied by all in his poverty, the prouder he was when he was rich. Thirdly, we have them all, but as Stewards, to lay out for our Maſters uſe, and therefore ſhould rather think how to make our accounts, than pride our ſelves in our receipts. Laſtly, whatever of theſe we have, they, as well as the former, are not owing to our ſelves. But if they be lawfully gotten, we owe them only to God, whoſe bleſſing it is, that maketh rich, *Prov.* 10. 22. If unlawfully, we have them upon ſuch terms that we have very little reaſon to brag of them. And thus you ſee in theſe ſeveral reſpects, the folly of this ſecond ſort of pride.

The goods of Grace.

11. The third is that of the goods of Grace; that is, any vertue a Man hath. And here I cannot ſay, but the things are very valuable, they being infinitely more precious than all the world, yet nevertheleſs this is of all the reſt the higheſt folly. And that not only in the foregoing reſpect, that we help not our ſelves to it, grace being above all things moſt immediately God's work in us, but eſpecially in this, that the being proud of Grace is the ſure way to loſe it. God, who gives grace to the humble, will take it from the proud. For if, as we ſee in the Parable, *Matth.* 25. 28. the Talent was taken from him who had only put it to no uſe at all, how ſhall he hope to have it continued to him that hath put it to ſo ill, that inſtead of trading with it for God, hath trafficked with it for Satan? And as he will loſe the Grace for the future, ſo he will loſe all the reward of it for the time paſt. For let a man have done never ſo many good acts, yet if he be proud of them; that pride ſhall be charged on him to his deſtruction, but the good ſhall never be remembred to his reward. And this proves it to be a moſt wretched folly to be proud of grace. It is like that of Children, that pull thoſe things in pieces they are moſt fond of, but yet much worſe than that of theirs, for we not only loſe the thing (and that the moſt precious that can be imagined) but we muſt alſo be eternally puniſhed for doing ſo, there being nothing that ſhall be ſo ſadly reckoned for in the next world, as the abuſe of Grace; and certainly there can be no greater abuſe of it than to make it ſerve for an end ſo directly contrary to that for which it was given, it being given to make us humble, not proud, to magnifie God, not our ſelves.

Means of Humility.

12. Having ſhewed you thus much of this ſin, I ſuppoſe it will appear very neceſſary to be eſchewed; to which purpoſe it will firſt be uſeful to conſider what hath been already ſaid concerning it, and that ſo ſeriouſly, as may work in thee not ſome ſlight diſlike, but a deep and irreconcileable hatred of the ſin: Secondly, to be very watchful over thine own heart, that it cheriſh not any beginnings of it; never ſuffer it to feed on the fancy of thy own worth; but whenever any ſuch thought ariſes, beat it down immediately with the remembrance of ſome of thy follies or ſins, and ſo make this very motion of pride an occaſion of humility. Thirdly, never to compare thy ſelf with thoſe thou thinkeſt more fooliſh or wicked than thy ſelf, that ſo thou mayeſt like the *Phariſee*, *Luke* 16. 11. extol thy ſelf for being better; but if thou wilt compare, do it with the Wiſe and Godly; and then thou wilt find thou comeſt ſo far ſhort as may help to pull down thy high eſteem of thy ſelf. Laſtly, To be very earneſt in Prayer, that God would root out all degrees of this ſin in thee, and make thee one of thoſe *poor in ſpirit*, *Matth.* 5. 3. to whom the bleſſing even of Heaven it ſelf is promiſed.

13. The

Vain-glory. 13. The second contrary to humility I told you was vain-glory. That
The sin. is, a great thirst after the praise of men. And first, that this is a sin, I need prove no otherwise, than by the words of our Saviour, *John* 5. 44. *How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another?* Where it appears, that it is not only a sin, but such an one as hinders the receiving of Christ into the heart, for so believing there signifies. This then in the second place shews you likewise the great dangerousness of this sin, for if it be that
The danger. which keeps Christ out of the heart, it is sure it brings infinite danger, since all our safety, all our hope of escaping the wrath to come, stands in receiving him. But besides the authority of this Text, common experience shews, that where-ever this sin hath possession, it endangers Men to fall into any other. For he that so considers the praise of men, that he must at no hand part with it, when ever the greatest sins come to be in fashion and credit (as God knows many are now adays) he will be sure to commit them rather than run the disgrace of being too single and precise; I doubt there are many consciences can witness the truth of this, so that I need say no more to prove the danger of this sin.

The folly. 14. The third thing I am to shew, is the folly of it; and that will appear first, by considering what it is we thus hunt after, nothing but a little air, a blast, the breath of Men, it brings us in nothing of real advantage: For I am made never the wiser nor the better for a mans saying I am wise and good. Besides, if I am commended, it must be either before my face or behind my back: If the former, it is very often flattery, and so the greatest abuse that can be offered, and then I must be very much a fool to be pleased with it. But if it be behind my back, I have not then so much as the pleasure of knowing it; and therefore it is a strange folly thus to pursue what is so utterly gainless. But secondly, it is not only gainless, but painful and uneasie also. He that eagerly seeks praise, is not at all master of himself, but must suit all his actions to that end, and instead of doing what his own reason and conscience (nay perhaps his worldly conveniency) directs him to, he must take care to do what will bring him in commendations, and so enslave himself to every one that hath but a tongue to commend him. Nay, there is yet a further uneasiness in it, and that is, when such a Man fails of his aim, when he misses the praise, and perhaps meets with the contrary reproach, (which is no mans lot more often than the vain-glorious, nothing making a Man more despised) then what disturbances and disquiets, and even tortures of mind is he under? A lively instance of this you have in *Achitophel*, 2 *Sam.* 17. 23. who had so much of this, upon *Absoloms* despising his counsel, that he chose to rid himself of it, by hanging himself. And sure this painfulness that thus attends this sin, is sufficient proof of the folly of it. Yet this is not all, it is yet further very hurtful. For if this vain-glory be concerning any good, or Christian Action, it destroys all the fruit of it; he that prays or gives alms to be seen of Men, *Matt.* 6. 2. must take that as his reward, *Verily I say unto you, they have their reward*; they must expect none from God, but the portion of those Hypocrites, that *love the praise of men more than the praise of God.* And this is a miserable folly to make such an exchange. It is like the Dog in the Fable, who seeing in the water the shadow of that Meat he held in his mouth, catcht at the shadow, and so let go his meat. Such Dogs, such unreasonable creatures are we, when we thus let go the eternal rewards of Heaven to catch at a few good words of men. And yet we do not only lose those eternal joys, but procure to our selves the contrary, eternal miseries, which is sure the highest pitch of folly and madness. But

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if the vain-glory be not concerning any vertuous action, but only ſome indifferent thing, yet even there alſo it is very hurtful; for vain-glory is a ſin that whereſoever it is placed, endangers our eternal eſtate, which is the greateſt of all miſchiefs. And even for the preſent it is obſervable, that of all other ſins it ſtands the moſt in its own light, hinders it ſelf of that very thing it purſues. For there are very few that thus hunt after praiſe, but they are diſcerned to do ſo, and that is ſure to eclipſe whatever praiſe-worthy thing they do, and brings ſcorn upon them inſtead of reputation. And then certainly we may juſtly condemn this ſin of folly which is ſo ill a manager even of its own deſign.

Helps against vain-glory.

15. You have ſeen how wretched a thing this vain-glory is in theſe ſeveral reſpects, the ſerious conſideration whereof may be one good means to ſubdue it, to which it will be neceſſary to add, firſt, a great watchfulneſs over thy ſelf; obſerve narrowly whether in any Chriſtian duty thou at all conſidereſt the praiſe of Men, or even in the moſt indifferent action, look whether thou have not too eager a deſire of it, and if thou findeſt thy ſelf inclined that way, have a very ſtrict eye upon it, and whereever thou findeſt it ſtirring, check and reſiſt it, ſuffer it not to be the end of thy actions: But in all matters of Religion let thy Duty be the Motive; in all indifferent things of common life let Reaſon direct thee; and though thou mayeſt ſo far conſider in thoſe things the opinion of Men, as to obſerve the rules of common decency, yet never think any praiſe that comes in to thee from any thing of that kind worth the contriving for. Secondly, ſet up to thy ſelf another aim, *viz.* that of pleaſing God: Let that be thy enquiry when thou goeſt about any thing; whether it be approved by him. And then thou wilt not be at leiſure to conſider what praiſe it will bring thee from men. And ſurely he that weighs of how much more moment it is to pleaſe God, who is able eternally to reward us, than man, whoſe applauſe can never do us any good, will ſurely think it reaſonable to make the former his only care. Thirdly, if at any time thou art praiſed, do not be much over-joyed with it, nor think a jot the better of thy ſelf; but if it be vertue thou art praiſed for, remember it was God that wrought it in thee, and give him the glory, never thinking any part of it belongs to thee: If it be ſome indifferent action; then remember that it cannot deſerve praiſe, as having no goodneſs in it: But if it be a bad one, (as amongſt Men ſuch are ſometimes likelieſt to be commended) then it ought to ſet thee a trembling in ſtead of rejoycing, for then that wo of our Saviour's belongs to thee, *Luke 6. 26. Wo unto you when men ſpeak well of you, for ſo did their Fathers to the falſe Prophets*; and there is not a greater ſign of a hardned heart, than when Men can make their ſins the matter of their glory. In the laſt place let thy prayers aſſiſt in the fight with this corruption.

Meekneſs.

16. A ſecond VERTUE is MEEKNES, that is, a calmneſs and quietneſs of ſpirit, contrary to the Rages and impatiencies of Anger. This Vertue may be exerciſed either in reſpect of God, or ~~his~~ our neighbour. That towards God I have already ſpoken of, under the head of Humility, and that towards our neighbour, I ſhall hereafter. All I have here to ſay of it is, how it becomes a duty to our ſelves: That it does in reſpect of the great advantage we reap by it; which in meer kindneſs to our ſelves, we are to look after. And to prove that it brings us this great advantage, I need ſay no more, but that this meekneſs is that to which Chriſt hath pronounced a bleſſing, *Matth.* 5. 5. *Bleſſed are the meek*, and not only in the next world, but even in this too, *they ſhall inherit the earth.* Indeed

Advantages of it.

none but the meek perſon hath the true enjoyment of any thing in the world, for the angry and impatient are like ſick people, who, we uſe to ſay, cannot enjoy the greateſt proſperities: For let things be never ſo fair without, they will raiſe ſtorms within their own breaſts. And ſurely whoever hath either in himſelf, or others obſerved the great uneaſineſs of this paſſion of anger, cannot chuſe but think meekneſs a moſt pleaſant thing.

17. Beſides, it is alſo a moſt honourable thing, for it is that whereby we reſemble Chriſt, *Learn of me*, ſaith he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, *Matth.* 11. 28. It is alſo that whereby we conquer our ſelves, overcome our own unruly paſſions, which of all victories is the greateſt and moſt noble. Laſtly, it is that which makes us behave our ſelves like Men, whereas anger gives us the fierceneſs and wildneſs of Savage beaſts. And accordingly the one is by all eſteemed and loved, whereas the other is hated and abhorred, every man ſhunning a man in rage as they would a furious beaſt.

18. Farther yet, meekneſs is the ſobriety of the mind, whereas anger is the direct madneſs; it puts a Man wholly out of his own power, and makes him do ſuch things as himſelf in his ſober temper abhors; how many Men have done thoſe things in their rage, which they have repented all their lives after? And therefore ſurely as much as a Man is more honourable than a Beaſt, a ſober man than a mad man, ſo much hath this vertue of Meekneſs the advantage of honour above the contrary vice of Anger.

19. Again, meekneſs makes any condition tolerable and eaſie to be endured. He that meekly bears any ſuffering, takes off the edge of it that it cannot wound him; whereas he that frets and rages at it, whets it and makes it much ſharper than it would be; nay, in ſome caſes makes that ſo, which would not elſe be ſo at all, as particularly in the caſe of reproachful words, which in themſelves can do us no harm, they neither hurt our Bodies nor leſſen our Eſtates, the only miſchief they can do us is to make us angry, and then our anger may do us many more, whereas he that meekly paſſes them by, is never the worſe for them, nay the better; for he ſhall be rewarded by God for that patience. Much more might be ſaid to recommend this vertue to us, in reſpect of our own preſent advantage, but I ſuppoſe this may ſuffice to perſwade Men to eſteem of it. The harder matter will be to gain them to the practice of it, wherein Men pretend I know not what difficulties of natural conſtitutions, and the like; yet ſure there is no Man of ſo Cholerick a temper, but if he did heartily ſet about it, would find it were not impoſſible in ſome good meaſure to ſubdue it: But then he muſt be diligent in uſing means to that end. Divers of theſe means there are, I ſhall mention ſome few.

Means of obtaining it.

20. As firſt, The imprinting deep in our minds the lovelineſs and benefits of meekneſs, together with the uglineſs and miſchiefs of anger. Secondly, to ſet before us the Example of Chriſt, who endured all reproaches, yea, torments with perfect patience, that was *led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter*, Iſaiah 53. 7. *That when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he ſuffered threatned not*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23. And if he, the Lord of Glory, ſuffered thus meekly and unjuſtly from his own creatures, with what face can we ever complain of any injury done to us? Thirdly, To be very watchful to prevent the very firſt beginnings of anger, and to that purpoſe to mortifie all inward peeviſhneſs and frowardneſs of mind, which is a ſin in it ſelf, though it proceed no further, but will alſo be ſure, if it be cheriſhed, to break out into open effects of anger. Therefore whenever thou findeſt the

the leaſt riſing of it within thee, make as much haſte to check it, as thou wouldſt to quench a fire in thy houſe; but be ſure thou bring no fuel to it, by entertaining any thoughts that may encreaſe it. And at ſuch time eſpecially keep a moſt ſtrict watch over thy tongue, that it break not out into any angry ſpeeches, for that breath will fan the fire, not only in thine adverſary, but thy ſelf too; therefore though thy heart be hot within, ſtifle the flame, and let it not break out; and the greater the temptation is, the more earneſtly lift up thy heart to God to aſſiſt thee to overcome it. Fourthly, often remember how great puniſhments thy ſins have deſerved, and then, whether thy ſufferings be from God or man, thou wilt acknowledge them to be far ſhort of what is due to thee, and therefore wilt be aſhamed to be impatient at them.

Conſideration.

21. The third Vertue is CONSIDERATION, and this in a moſt ſpecial manner we owe to our Souls. For without it we ſhall, as raſh unadviſed people uſe to do, ruſh them into infinite perils. Now this Conſideration is either of our State, or of our Actions. By our State, I mean what our condition is to God-ward, whether it be ſuch that we may reaſonably conclude our ſelves in his favour. This it much concerns us to conſider and examine, and that not by thoſe eaſie rules Men are apt to frame to themſelves, as whether they believe that Chriſt died for their ſins; that they are of the number of the elect, and ſhall certainly be ſaved: if theſe and the like were all that were required to put us into God's favour, none but ſome melancholy perſon could ever be out of it; for we are apt enough generally to believe comfortably of our ſelves. But the Rules God hath given us in his Word are thoſe by which we muſt be tried at the laſt day, and therefore are certainly the only ſafe ones by which to try our ſelves now. And the ſum of thoſe are, that whoſoever continues in any one wilful ſin, is not in his favour, nor can, if he do ſo die, hope for any mercy at his hand.

Of our State.

The Rule by which to try our State.

22. Now it is highly neceſſary we ſhould conſider what our condition is in this reſpect: For ſince our life is nothing but a puff of breath in our Noſtrils, which may for ought we know be taken from us the next minute, it nearly concerns us to know how we are provided for another world, that ſo in caſe we want at preſent that oil in our Lamps wherewith we are to meet the Bridegroom, *Matth.* 25. 8. we may timely get it, and not for want of it be ever ſhut out like the fooliſh Virgins from his preſence. The neglect of this conſideration hath undone many Souls, ſome by too eaſie a belief that they were in a good condition, without conſidering and trying themſelves by the foregoing Rule, but preſuming either upon ſome ſlight outward performances, or upon ſuch a falſe faith as I even now deſcribed; others by the wretched careleſs going on, without ſo much as asking themſelves what their condition is, but hope they ſhould do as well as their Neighbours, and ſo never enquiring farther; which wretched careleſneſs will as certainly undo the ſpiritual as the like would do the temporal eſtate; yet in that every man is wiſe enough to foreſee, that a Man that never takes any accounts of his Eſtate to ſee whether he be worth ſomething or nothing, will be ſure to be a beggar in the End. But in this far weightier matter we can generally be thus improvident.

The danger of inconſideration.

23. The ſecond thing we are to conſider, is our Actions, and thoſe either before or after the doing of them. In the firſt place we are to conſider before we act, and not to do any thing raſhly or headily; but firſt, to adviſe with our conſciences, whether this be lawful to be done, for he that follows his own inclination, and does every thing which that moves him to,

Our actions.

Before we do them.

ſhall be ſure to fall into a multitude of ſins. Therefore conſider ſoberly, and be aſſured of the lawfulneſs of the thing before thou venture to do it. This adviſedneſs is in all worldly things accounted ſo neceſſary a part of wiſdom, that no Man is accounted wiſe without it; a raſh man we look upon as the next degree to a fool. And yet it is ſure, there is not ſo much need of looking about us in any thing as in what concerns our Souls, and that not only in reſpect of the great value of them above all things elſe, but alſo in regard of the great danger they are in, as hath been ſhewed more at large in the beginning of the Treatiſe.

After they are done. 24. Secondly, We are to conſider the actions when they are paſt alſo, that is, we are to examine whether they have been ſuch as are allowable by the Laws of Chriſt. This is very neceſſary whether they be good or bad; if they be good, the recalling them helpeth us to the comfort of a good conſcience, and that comfort again encourageth us to go on in the like; and beſides, it ſtirs us up to thankfulneſs to God, by whoſe grace alone we were enabled to do them. But if they be bad, then it is eſpecially neceſſary that we thus examine them, for without this it is impoſſible we ſhould ever come to amendment, for unleſs we obſerve them to have been amiſs, we can never think it needful to amend, but ſhall ſtill run on from one wickedneſs to another, which is the greateſt curſe any man can lye under.

Frequency of conſideration. 25. The oftner therefore we uſe this Conſideration, the better, for the leſs likely it is that any of our ſins ſhall eſcape our knowledge. It is much to be wiſht that every man would thus every night try the actions of the day, that ſo, if he have done any thing amiſs, he may ſoon check himſelf for it, and ſettle his reſolutions againſt it, and not let it grow on to a habit and courſe. And that he may alſo early beg Gods pardon, which will the eaſier be had the ſooner it is asked, every delay of that being a great increaſe of the ſin. And ſurely whoever means to take an account of himſelf at all, will find this the eaſier courſe; it being much eaſier to do it ſo a little at a time, and while paſſages are freſh in his memory, than to take the account of a long time together. Now if it be conſidered, that every wilful ſin muſt have a particular repentance before it can be pardoned, methinks men ſhould tremble to ſleep without that repentance; for what aſſurance hath any man that lies down in his bed, that he ſhall ever riſe again? And then how dangerous is the condition of that man that ſleeps in an unrepented ſin? The weighing of theſe ſeveral Motives may be a means, by Gods bleſſing, to bring us to the practice of this duty of Conſideration in all the parts of it.

Danger of omitting it.

SUNDAY VII.

Of Contentedneſs and the Contraries to it; Murmuring, Ambition, Covetouſneſs, Envy; Helps to Contentedneſs; of duties which concern our Bodies; of Chaſtity, &c. Helps to it; of Temperance.

Contentedneſs. *Sect.* 1. THE Fourth VERTUE is CONTENTEDNES, and this ſurely is a duty we muſt owe to our ſelves, it being that without which it is impoſſible to be happy. This Contentedneſs is a well-pleaſedneſs with that condition, whatever it is, that God hath placed us in, not murmuring and repining at our lot, but cheerfully welcoming whatſoever God ſends. How great, and withal how pleaſant a vertue this is, may appear by the contrariety it hath to ſeveral great and painful vices; ſo

ſo that where this is rooted in the heart, it ſubdues not only ſome ſuch ſingle ſin, but a cluſter of them together.

2. And firſt it is contrary to all murmuring in general, which is a ſin moſt hateful to God, as may appear by his ſharp puniſhments of it on the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, as you may read in ſeveral places of the book of *Exodus*, and *Numbers*. And ſurely it is alſo very painful and uneaſie to a mans ſelf; for if, as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, it be a *joyful and pleaſant thing to be thankful*, we may by the Rule of contraries conclude, it is a ſad and unpleaſant thing to be murmuring, and, I doubt not, every mans own experience will confirm the truth of it. *Contrary to murmuring.*

3. Secondly, It is contrary to Ambition; the ambitious man is always diſliking his preſent condition, and that makes him ſo greedily to ſeek a higher, whereas he that is content with his own, lies quite out of the road of this temptation. Now Ambition is not only a great ſin in it ſelf, but it puts men upon many other: There is nothing ſo horrid, which a man that eagerly ſeeks greatneſs will ſtick at; lying, perjury, murder, or any thing will down with him, if they ſeem to tend to his advancement; And the uneaſineſs of it is anſwerable to the ſin. This none can doubt of, that conſiders what a multitude of fears and jealouſies, cares and diſtractions there are that attend ambition in its progreſs, beſides the great and publick ruines that uſually befal it in the end. And therefore ſure Contentedneſs is in this reſpect as well a Happineſs as a Vertue. *To ambition.*

4. Thirdly, It is contrary to Covetouſneſs; this the Apoſtle witneſſeth, *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as ye have*; where you ſee contentedneſs is ſet as the direct contrary to covetouſneſs. But of this there needs not other Proof than common experience; for we ſee the covetous man never thinks he hath enough, and therefore can never be content; for no man can be ſaid to be ſo that thirſts after any thing he hath not. Now that you may ſee how excellent and neceſſary a vertue this is that ſecures us againſt covetouſneſs, it will not be amiſs a little to conſider the nature of that ſin. *To Covetouſneſs.*

5. That it is a very great crime, is moſt certain, for it is contrary to the very foundation of all good life; I mean thoſe three great Duties, to God, to our Selves, to our Neighbours. Firſt, It is ſo contrary to our Duty to God, that Chriſt himſelf tells us, *Luke* 16. 13. *We cannot ſerve God and Mammon*: He that ſets his heart upon wealth, muſt neceſſarily take it off from God. And this we daily ſee in the covetous mans practice, he is ſo eager in the gaining of riches, that he hath no time or care to perform duty to God; let but a good bargain, or opportunity of gain come in his way, Prayer and all duties of Religion muſt be neglected to attend it. Nay, when the committing the greateſt ſin againſt God may be likely either to get or ſave him ought, his love of wealth quickly perſwades him to commit it. *Covetouſneſs contrary to our duty to God.*

6. Secondly, It is contrary to the Duty we owe our Selves, and that both in reſpect of our Souls and Bodies. The covetous man deſpiſes his Soul, ſells that to eternal deſtruction for a little pelf: For ſo every man does that by any unlawful means ſeeks to enrich himſelf; nay, though he do it not by unlawful means, yet if he have once ſet his heart upon wealth, he is that covetous perſon upon whom the Apoſtle hath pronounced, *That he ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of God*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. Nor doth he only offend againſt his Soul but his Body too. For he often denies that thoſe neceſſary refreſhments it wants, and for which his wealth (as far as it concerns himſelf) was given him. This is ſo conſtantly the cuſtom of rich Miſers, that I need not prove it to you. *To our Selves.*

7. In

To our neighbours. 7. In the third place, Covetouſneſs is contrary to the duty we owe to our Neighbours. And that in both the parts of it, Juſtice and Charity: He that loves money immoderately, will not care whom he cheats and defrauds, ſo he may bring in gain to himſelf: And from hence ſpring thoſe many tricks of deceit and couzenage ſo common in the world. As for Charity, that is never to be hoped for from a covetous Man, who dreads the leſſening of his own heaps more than the ſtarving of his poor brother. You ſee how great a ſin this is, that we may well ſay of it as the Apoſtle doth, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. *The love of money is the root of all evil.* And it is not much leſs uneaſie than wicked, for between the care of getting and the fear of loſing, the covetous man enjoys no quiet hour. Therefore every man is deeply concerned, as he tenders his happineſs either in this world or the next, to guard himſelf againſt this ſin, which he can no way do, but by poſſeſſing his heart with this vertue of contentedneſs.

Contentedneſs contrary to envy. 8. In the fourth place it is contrary to envy, for he that is content with his own condition hath no temptation to envy anothers: How unchriſtian a ſin this of envy is, ſhall hereafter be ſhewed; At the preſent, I need ſay no more, but that it is alſo a very uneaſie one, it frets and gnaws the very heart of him that harbours it. But the worſe this ſin is, the more excellent ſtill is this grace of Contentedneſs, which frees us from it. I ſuppoſe I have ſaid enough to make you think this a very lovely and deſirable Vertue. And ſure it were not impoſſible to be gained by any, that would but obſerve theſe few directions.

Helps to contentedneſs. 9. Firſt, To conſider, that whatever our eſtate and condition in any reſpect be, it is that which is allotted us by God, and therefore is certainly the beſt for us, he being much better able to judge for us, than we for our ſelves; and therefore to be diſpleaſed at it is in effect to ſay, we are wiſer than he. Secondly, Conſider throughly the vanity of all worldly things, how very little there is in them, while we have them; and how uncertain we are to keep them; but above all, in how little ſtead they will ſtand us at the day of death or judgment, and then thou canſt not think any of them much worth the deſiring, and ſo wilt not be diſcontented for want of them. Thirdly, Suffer not thy fancy to run on things thou haſt not; many have put themſelves out of love with what they have, only by thinking what they want. He that ſees his neighbour poſſeſs ſomewhat, which himſelf hath not, is apt to think how happy he ſhould be, if he were in that mans condition, and in the mean time never thinks of enjoying his own, which yet perhaps in many reſpects may be much happier than that of his neighbours which he ſo much admires. For we look but upon the outſide of other mens conditions; and many a man that is envied by his neighbours, as a wonderful happy perſon, hath yet ſome ſecret trouble, which makes him think much otherwiſe of himſelf. Therefore never compare thy condition in any thing with thoſe thou counteſt more proſperous than thy ſelf, but rather do it with thoſe thou knoweſt more unhappy, and then thou wilt find cauſe to rejoyce in thine own portion. Fourthly, Conſider how far thou art from deſerving any good thing from God, and then thou canſt not but with *Jacob*, *Gen.* 32. 10. confeſs that thou art *not worthy of the leaſt of thoſe mercies* thou enjoyeſt, and inſtead of murmuring that they are no more, wilt ſee reaſon to admire, and praiſe the bounty of God, that they are ſo many. Fifthly, be often thinking of the joys laid up for thee in Heaven: Look upon that as thy home, on this world only as an Inn, where thou art fain to take up in thy paſſage; and then as a Traveller expects not the ſame conveniences at an Inn,

that

that he hath at home; ſo thou haſt reaſon to be content with whatever entertainment thou findeſt here, knowing thou art upon thy journey to a place of infinite happineſs, which will make an abundant amends for all the uneaſineſs, and hardſhip thou canſt ſuffer in the way. Laſtly, Pray to God, from whom all good things do come, that he will to all his other bleſſings, add this of a contented mind, without which thou canſt have no taſte or reliſh of any other.

10. A fifth Duty is DILIGENCE: This is made up of two parts, watchfulneſs, and induſtry, and both theſe we owe to our Souls. *Diligence.*

11. Firſt, Watchfulneſs, in obſerving all the dangers that threaten them. Now ſince nothing can endanger our Souls, but ſin, this watchfulneſs is principally to be employed againſt that: And as in a beſieged City where there is any weak part, there it is neceſſary to keep the ſtrongeſt guard; ſo it is here, whereever thou findeſt thy inclinations ſuch, as are moſt likely to betray thee to ſin, there it concerns thee to be eſpecially watchful. Obſerve therefore carefully to what ſins either thy natural temper, thy company, or thy courſe of life do particularly incline thee, and watch thy ſelf very narrowly in thoſe; yet do not ſo lay out all thy care on thoſe, as to leave thy ſelf open to any other, for that may give Satan as much advantage on the other ſide; but let thy watch be general, againſt all ſin, though in a ſpecial manner againſt thoſe, which are like oftenеſt to aſſault thee. *Watchfulneſs againſt ſin.*

12. The ſecond part of diligence, is induſtry or labour, and this alſo we owe to our Souls, for without it they will as little proſper as the vineyard of the ſluggard; which *Solomon* deſcribes, *Prov.* 24. 30. For there is a husbandry of the Soul, as well as of the Eſtate, and the end of the one, as of the other, is the encreaſing and improving of its riches. Now the riches of the Soul are either Natural or Divine. By the natural I mean its faculties or reaſon, wit, memory, and the like; by the Divine I mean the graces of God, which are not the Souls Natural portion, but are given immediately by God; and both theſe we are to take care to improve, they being both talents intruſted to us for that purpoſe. *Induſtry in improving gifts.*

13. The way of improving the Natural, is by imploying them ſo, as may bring in moſt honour to God: We muſt not let them lie idle by us through ſloth, neither muſt we overwhelm them with intemperance, and brutiſh pleaſures, which is the caſe of too many, but we muſt imploy them, and ſet them on work. But then we muſt be ſure it be not in the Devils ſervice; like many, who ſet their wit only to the profaning of God, or cheating their neighbours, and ſtuff their memories with ſuch filthineſs, as ſhould never once enter their thoughts; our uſe of them muſt be ſuch, as may bring in moſt glory to God, moſt benefit to our neighbours, and may beſt fit us to make our accounts, when God ſhall come to reckon with us for them. *of Nature.*

14. But the other part of the Souls riches, is yet more precious, that is, Grace, and of this we muſt be eſpecially careful, to husband and improve it. This is a duty expreſly commanded us by the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. *Grow in grace.* And again in the firſt Chapter of that Epiſtle, verſe 5. *Give all diligence to add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge*, &c. Now the eſpecial means of improving grace is by imploying it, that is, by doing thoſe things, for the enabling of us whereunto it was given us: This is a ſure means, not only in reſpect of that eaſineſs, which a cuſtom of any thing brings in the doing of it, but principally, as it hath the promiſe of God, who hath promiſed, *Matth.* 25. 29. That *to him that hath* (that is, hath made uſe of what he hath) *ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance.* *of Grace.*

He

He that diligently and faithfully employs the first beginnings of Grace, shall yet have more, and he that in like manner husbands that more, shall yet have a greater degree; so that what *Solomon* saith of temporal riches, is also true of spiritual, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

To improve good motions.

15. Therefore whenever thou findest any good motions in thy heart, remember that is a season for this spiritual husbandry: If thou hast but a check of conscience against any sin thou livest in, drive that on till it come to a hatred; and then that hatred, till it come to resolution; then from that resolution, proceed to some endeavours against it. Do this faithfully and sincerely, and thou shalt certainly find the grace of God assisting thee, not only in every of these steps, but also enabling thee to advance still higher, till thou come to some Victory over it. Yet to this industry thou must not fail to add thy prayers also, there being a promise that God will *give the holy Spirit to them that ask it*, *Matth.* 7. 11. And therefore they that ask it not, have no reason to expect it. But it must be asked with such an earnestness, as is some way answerable to the value of the thing, which being infinitely more precious than all the world, both in respect of its own worth, and its usefulness to us, we must beg it with much more zeal and earnestness, than all temporal blessings, or else we shew our selves despisers of it.

The danger of the contrary.

16. Having directed you to the means of improving grace, I shall, to quicken you to it, mention the great danger of the contrary; and that is not as in other things, the losing only those further degrees, which our industry might have helped us to, but it is the losing even of what we already have; *For from him that hath not* (that is again, hath not made use of what he hath) *shall be taken away even that which he hath*, *Matth.* 25. 29. God will withdraw the grace, which he sees so neglected, as we see in that parable; the Talent was taken from him that had only hid it in a Napkin, and had brought in no gain to his Lord. And this is a most sad punishment, the greatest that can befal any man, before he comes to Hell, indeed it is some kind of fore-taste of it, it is the delivering him up to the power of the Devil, and it is the banishing him from the face of God, which are not the least parts of the misery of the damned, and it is also the binding a man over to that fuller portion of wretchedness in another world; for that is the last doom of the unprofitable servant, *Matth.* 25.30. *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* You see there are no light dangers that attend this neglect of grace, and therefore if we have any love, nay, any common pity to our Souls, we must set our selves to this industry. I have now done with those VERTUES which respect our SOULS, I come now to those which concern our BODIES.

Chastity.

17. The first of which is CHASTITY or PURITY, which may well be set in the front of the duties we owe to our bodies, since the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 6. 18. sets the contrary as the especial sin against them, *He that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body.*

18. Now this vertue of chastity consists in a perfect abstaining from all kinds of uncleanness, not only that of Adultery, and Fornication, but all other more unnatural sorts of it committed either upon our selves, or with any other. In a word, all acts of that kind are utterly against Chastity, save only in lawful marriage. And even there men are not to think themselves let loose to please their brutish appetites, but are to keep themselves within such rules of moderation, as agree to the ends of marriage, which being these two, the begetting of Children, and the avoiding of Fornication,

nication, nothing muſt be done which may hinder the firſt of theſe ends; and the ſecond aiming only at the ſubduing of luſt, the keeping men from any ſinful effects of it, is very contrary to that end to make marriage an occaſion of heightning and enflaming it.

19. But this vertue of Chaſtity reacheth not only to the reſtraining of the groſſer act, but to all lower degrees; it ſets a guard upon our eyes, according to that of our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. 28. *He that looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*; and upon our hand, as appears by what Chriſt adds in that place, *If thy hand offend thee, cut it off*: So alſo upon our tongues, that they ſpeak no immodeſt or filthy words, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth*, *Epheſ.* 4. 29. Nay, upon our very thoughts and fancies, we muſt not entertain any foul or filthy deſires, not ſo much as the imagination of any ſuch thing. Therefore he that forbears the groſſer act, and yet allows himſelf in any of theſe, it is to be ſuſpected that it is rather ſome outward reſtraint that keeps him from it, than the conſcience of the ſin. For if it were that, it would keep him from theſe too, theſe being ſins alſo, and very great ones in Gods ſight. Beſides, he that lets himſelf looſe to theſe, puts himſelf in very great danger of the other, it being much more eaſie to abſtain from all, than to ſecure againſt the one, when the other is allowed. But above all, it is to be conſidered that even theſe lower degrees are ſuch as make Men very odious in Gods eyes, who ſeeth the heart, and loves none that are not pure there. *Uncleanneſs forbidden in the very loweſt degrees.*

20. The lovelineſs of this Vertue of Chaſtity needs no other way of deſcribing, than by conſidering the loathſomneſs and miſchiefs of the contrary ſin, which is firſt, very brutiſh: Thoſe deſires are but the ſame that the Beaſts have, and then how far are they ſunk below the nature of men, that can boaſt of their ſins of that kind, as of their ſpecial excellency? When, if that be the meaſure, a Goat is the more excellent creature. But indeed they that eagerly purſue this part of Beſtiality, do often leave themſelves little, beſides their humane ſhape, to difference them from Beaſts: This ſin ſo clouds the underſtanding, and defaceth the reaſonable Soul. Therefore *Solomon* very well deſcribes the young man that was going to the Harlots houſe, *Prov.* 7. 22. *He goeth after her as an Ox goeth to the ſlaughter.* *The miſchiefs of it.* *To the Soul.*

21. Nor ſecondly, are the effects of it better to the body than to the mind. The many foul and filthy, beſides painful diſeaſes, which often follow this ſin, are ſufficient witneſſes how miſchievous it is to the body. And alas, how many are there that have thus made themſelves the Devils Martyrs? ſuffered ſuch torments in the purſuit of this ſin, as would exceed the invention of the greateſt tyrant? Surely they that pay thus dear for damnation, very well deſerve to enjoy the purchaſe. *To the Body.*

22. But thirdly, Beſides the natural fruits of this ſin, it is attended with very great and heavy Judgments from God; the moſt extraordinary and miraculous Judgment that ever befel any place, Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, was for this ſin of uncleanneſs: And many examples likewiſe of Gods vengeance may be obſerved on particular perſons, for this ſin. The inceſt of *Amnon* coſt him his life, as you may read, 2 *Sam.* 13. *Zimri* and *Cozbi* were ſlain in the very act, *Numb.* 25. 8. And no perſon that commits the like hath any aſſurance it ſhall not be his own caſe. For how ſecretly ſoever it be committed, it cannot be hid from God, who is the ſure avenger of all ſuch wickedneſs. Nay, God hath very particularly threatned this ſin, 1 *Cor.* 3. 17. *If any man defile* *The judgments of God againſt it.*

the Temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy. This ſin of uncleanneſs is a kind of ſacriledge, a polluting thoſe bodies which God hath choſen for his Temples, and therefore no wonder, if it be thus heavily puniſhed.

It ſhuts out from Heaven. 23. Laſtly, This ſin ſhuts us out from the Kingdom of Heaven, wherein no impure thing can enter. And we never find any liſt of thoſe ſins, which bar men thence, but this of uncleanneſs hath a ſpecial place in it. Thus it is, *Gal.* 5. 19. and ſo again, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. If we will thus pollute our ſelves, we are fit company only for thoſe black ſpirits, the Devil and his Angels, and therefore with them we muſt expect our portion, where our flames of luſt ſhall end in flames of fire.

Helps to Chaſtity. 24. All this laid together, may ſurely recommend the vertue of Chaſtity to us, for the preſerving of which we muſt be very careful, firſt, to check the beginnings of the temptation, to caſt away the very firſt fancy of luſt with indignation; for if you once fall to parley and talk with it, it gains ſtill more upon you, and then it will be harder to reſiſt; Therefore your way in this temptation is to fly rather than fight with it. This is very neceſſary, not only that we may avoid the danger of proceeding to act the ſin, but alſo in reſpect of the preſent fault of entertaining ſuch fancies, which of it ſelf, though it ſhould never proceed further, is, as hath been ſhewed, a great abomination before God. Secondly, have a ſpecial care to fly idleneſs, which is the proper ſoil for theſe filthy weeds to grow in, and keep thy ſelf always buſied in ſome innocent or vertuous imployment; for then theſe fancies will be leſs apt to offer themſelves. Thirdly, never ſuffer thy ſelf to recal any unclean paſſages of thy former life with delight, for that is to act over the ſin again, and will be ſo reckoned by God; nay perhaps thus deliberately to think of it may be a greater guilt than a raſh acting of it. For this both ſhews thy heart to be ſet upon filthineſs, and is alſo a preparation to more acts of it. Fourthly, forbear the company of ſuch light and wanton Perſons, as either by the filthineſs of their diſcourſe, or any other means, may be a ſnare to thee. Fifthly, pray earneſtly, that God would give thee the Spirit of Purity, eſpecially at the time of any preſent temptation. Bring the unclean Devil to Chriſt to be caſt out, as did the Man in the Goſpel; and if it will not be caſt out with Prayer alone, add Faſting to it; but be ſure thou do not keep up the flame by any high or immoderate feeding. The laſt remedy when the former prove vain, is marriage, which becomes a duty to him that cannot live innocently without it. But even here there muſt be care taken, leſt this which ſhould be for his good, become not to him an occaſion of falling for want of ſobriety in the uſe of Marriage. But this I have toucht on already, and therefore need add no more but an earneſt intreaty, that Men would conſider ſeriouſly of the foulneſs and danger of this ſin of uncleanneſs, and not let the commonneſs of it leſſen their hatred of it, but rather make them abhor that ſhameleſs impudence of the world, that can make light of this ſin againſt which God hath pronounced ſuch heavy curſes, *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge, Heb.* 13. 4. and ſo he will certainly do all ſorts of unclean perſons whatſoever.

Temperance. 25. The ſecond VERTUE that concerns our Bodies is TEMPERANCE: And the exerciſes of that are divers, as firſt, Temperance in Eating; ſecondly, in Drinking; thirdly, in Sleep; fourthly, in Recreation; fifthly, in Apparel. I ſhall ſpeak of them ſeverally; and firſt of temperance in Eating. *In Eating.* This temperance is obſerved when our eating is agreeable to thoſe ends to which eating is by God and nature deſigned; thoſe are firſt, the being; ſecondly, the well-being of our Bodies. *Ends of eating.*

26. Man

26. Man is of ſuch a frame that Eating becomes neceſſary to him for the preſerving his life; hunger being a natural diſeaſe which will prove deadly if not prevented, and the only Phyſick for it is eating, which is therefore become a neceſſary means of keeping us alive. And that is the firſt end of eating, and as Men uſe not to take Phyſick for pleaſure, but remedy, ſo neither ſhould they eat. *Preſerving of life.*

27. But ſecondly, God hath been ſo bountiful as to provide not only for the being, but the well-being of our bodies, and therefore we are not tied to ſuch ſtrictneſs, that we may eat no more than will juſt keep us from ſtarving, but we may alſo eat whatſoever either for kind or quantity moſt tends to the health and welfare of them: Now that eating which is agreeable to theſe ends, is within the bounds of temperance, as on the contrary whatſoever is contrary to them, is a tranſgreſſion againſt it; he therefore that ſets up to himſelf other ends of eating, as either the pleaſing of his taſte, or (what is yet worſe) the pampering of his body, that he may the better ſerve his luſt, he directly thwarts and croſſes theſe ends of God; for he that hath thoſe aims doth that which is very contrary to health, yea, to life it ſelf, as appears by the many diſeaſes and untimely deaths which ſurfeiting and uncleanneſs daily bring on Men. *of Health.*

28. He therefore that will practiſe this Vertue of Temperance, muſt neither eat ſo much, nor of any ſuch ſorts of Meat (provided he can have other) as may be hurtful to his health: What the ſorts or quantities ſhall be, is impoſſible to ſet down, for that differs according to the ſeveral conſtitutions of Men, ſome Men may with temperance eat a great deal, becauſe their ſtomachs require it; when another may be guilty of intemperance in eating but half ſo much, becauſe it is more than is uſeful to him. And ſo alſo for the ſort of Meat, it may be niceneſs and luxury for ſome to be curious in them, when yet ſome degree of it may be neceſſary to the infirmities of a weak ſtomach, which not out of wantonneſs, but diſeaſe cannot eat the courſer Meats. But I think it may in general be ſaid, that to healthful Bodies the plaineſt Meats are generally the moſt wholſom, but every Man muſt in this be left to judge for himſelf; and that he may do it aright, he muſt be careful that he never ſuffer himſelf to be enſlaved to his Palate, for that will be ſure to ſatisfie it ſelf, whatever becomes of health or life. *Rules of Temperance in Eating.*

29. To ſecure him the better, let him conſider, Firſt, how unreaſonable a thing it is that the whole body ſhould be ſubject to this one Senſe of Taſting, that it muſt run all hazards only to pleaſe that. But it is yet much more ſo, that the Diviner part, the Soul, ſhould alſo be thus enſlaved; and yet thus it is in an intemperate Perſon, his very Soul muſt be ſacrificed to this brutiſh appetite; for the ſin of intemperance, though it be acted by the Body, yet the Soul muſt ſhare in the eternal puniſhment of it. Secondly, Conſider how extreme ſhort and vaniſhing this pleaſure is, it is gone in a moment, but the pains that attend the exceſs of it are much more durable, and then ſurely it agrees not with that common reaſon, wherewith, as men, we are indued, to ſet our hearts upon it. But then in the third place, it agrees yet worſe with the temper of a Chriſtian, who ſhould have his heart ſo purified and refined with the expectation of thoſe higher and ſpiritual joys he looks for in another world, that he ſhould very much deſpiſe theſe groſs and brutiſh pleaſures, which beaſts are as capable of as we, and to them we may well be contented to leave them, it being the higheſt their natures can reach to; but for us who have ſo much more excellent hopes, it is an intolerable ſhame that we ſhould ac- *Means of it.*

count them as any part of our happineſs. Laſtly, the ſin of Gluttony is ſo great and dangerous, that Chriſt thought fit to give an eſpecial warning againſt it. *Take heed to your ſelves that your hearts be not overcharged with ſurfeiting*, &c. *Luke* 21. 34. And you know what was the end of the rich glutton, *Luke* 16. He that had *fared deliciouſly every day*, at laſt wants a *drop of water to cool his tongue*. So much for the firſt ſort of Temperance, that of Eating.

SUNDAY VIII.

Of Temperance in Drinking, Falſe ends of drinking, viz. *Good-fellowſhip, putting away Cares*, &c.

Temperance in drinking.

Sect. 1. THE ſecond is Temperance in Drinking: And the ends of eating and drinking being much the ſame, I can give no other direct rules in this, than what were given in the former, to wit, that we drink neither of ſuch ſorts of Liquor, nor in ſuch quantities as may not agree with the right ends of drinking, the preſerving our lives and healths: Only in this there will be need of putting in one Caution: For our underſtandings being in more danger to be hurt by drinking than meat, we muſt rather take care to keep that ſafe, and rather not drink what we might ſafely in reſpect of our health, if it be in danger to diſtemper our reaſon. This I ſay, becauſe it is poſſible ſome Mens brains may be ſo weak that their heads cannot bear that ordinary quantity of Drink which would do their Bodies no harm. And whoever is of this temper muſt ſtrictly abſtain from that degree of drink, or that ſort of it which he finds hath that effect, yea, though it do in other reſpects appear not only ſafe but uſeful to his health. For though we are to preſerve our healths, yet we are not to do it by a ſin, as drunkenneſs moſt certainly is.

Falſe ends of drinking.

2. But alas! of thoſe multitudes of drunkards we have in the world, this is the caſe but of very few, moſt of them going far beyond what their health requires, yea, or can bear, even to the utter deſtruction thereof. And therefore it is plain, Men have ſet up to themſelves ſome other ends of drinking than thoſe allowable ones forementioned; it may not be amiſs a little to explain what they are, and withal to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of them.

Good Fellowſhip.

3. The firſt, and moſt owned, is that which they call Good-fellowſhip; one Man drinks to keep another company at it. But I would ask ſuch a one, whether if that Man were drinking rank poiſon, he would pledge him for company? If he ſay he would not, I muſt tell him, that by the very ſame, nay, far greater reaſon, he is not to do this. For immoderate drinking is that very poiſon; perhaps it doth not always work death immediate (yet there want not many inſtances of its having done even that, very many have died in their drunken fit) but that the cuſtom of it does uſually bring Men to their ends, is paſt doubt; and therefore though the poiſon work ſlowly, yet it is ſtill poiſon. But however, it doth at the preſent work that which a wiſe Man would more abhor than death; it works madneſs, and frenzy, turns the Man into a Beaſt, by drowning that reaſon which ſhould difference him from one. Certainly the effects of drink are ſuch, that had being drunk been firſt enjoyned as a puniſhment, we ſhould have thought him a more than ordinary Tyrant that had invented it.

4. A ſe-

4. A ſecond end of drinking is ſaid to be the maintaining of friendſhip, and kindneſs amongſt Men. But this is ſtrangely unreaſonable, that Men ſhould do that towards the maintaining of friendſhip, which is really the greateſt miſchief that can be done to any Man. Did ever any think to befriend a man by helping to deſtroy his eſtate, his credit, his life? Yet he that thus drinks with a Man, does this and much more; he ruines his reaſon, yea, his Soul, and yet this muſt be called the way of preſerving of friendſhip. This is ſo ridiculous, that one would think none could own it but when he were actually drunk. But beſides, alas! experience ſhews us that this is fitter to beget quarrels than preſerve kindneſs, as the many drunken brawls we every day ſee, with the wounds, and ſometimes murders that accompany them, do witneſs. *Preſerving of kindneſs.*

5. A third end is ſaid to be the chearing of their ſpirits, making them merry and jolly. But ſure if the mirth be ſuch that reaſon muſt be turned out of doors before it begin, it will be very little worth; one may ſay with *Solomon*, Eccleſ. 2.2. *The laughter of ſuch fools is madneſs.* And ſure they that will be drunk, to put themſelves in this temper, muſt by the ſame reaſon be glad of a Frenzy, if they could but be ſure it would be of the merry ſort. But little do theſe merry folks think what ſadneſs they are all this while heaping up to themſelves, often in this world, when by ſome mad pranks they play in their jollity, they bring miſchief upon themſelves, but however certainly in another, where this mirth will be ſadly reckoned for. *Chearing the ſpirits.*

6. A fourth end is ſaid to be the putting away of cares: but I ſhall ask what thoſe cares are? Be they ſuch as ſhould be put away? Perhaps they are ſome checks and remorſes of conſcience, which muſt be thus charmed. And I doubt this hath proved too effectual with many to the laying them aſleep. But this is the wickedeſt folly in the world; for if thou thinkeſt not theſe checks to have ſomething conſiderable in them, why do they trouble thee? But if thou do, it is impoſſible thou canſt hope this can long ſecure thee from them. Thou mayeſt thus ſtop their mouths for a while, but they will one day cry the louder for it. Suppoſe a Thief or a Murderer knew he were purſued to be brought to Juſtice, would he, think you, to put away the fear of being hanged, fall to drinking, and in the mean time take no care for his eſcape? Or would you not think him deſperately mad, if he did? Yet this is the very caſe here; Thy conſcience tells thee of thy danger, that thou muſt ere long be brought before Gods judgment-ſeat; and is it not madneſs for thee, inſtead of endeavouring to get thy pardon, to drink away the thought of thy danger? But in the ſecond place, ſuppoſe theſe cares be ſome worldly ones, and ſuch as are fit to be put away; then for ſhame do not ſo diſgrace thy Reaſon, thy Chriſtianity, as not to let them be as forcible to that end as a little drink. Thy reaſon will tell thee it is in vain to care, where care will bring no advantage: And thy Chriſtianity will direct thee to one on whom thou mayeſt *ſafely caſt all thy cares, for he careth for thee*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. And therefore unleſs thou meaneſt to renounce being both a Man and a Chriſtian, never betake thee to this pitiful ſhift to rid thee of thy cares. But beſides, this will not do the deed neither, for though it may at the preſent, whilſt thou art in the height of the drunken fit, keep thee from the ſenſe of thy cares, yet when that is over, they will return again with greater violence; and, if thou haſt any conſcience, bring a new care with them, even that which ariſeth from the guilt of ſo foul a ſin. *Putting away cares.*

7. A fifth end is ſaid to be the paſſing away of Time. This, though it be as unreaſonable as any of the former, yet, by the way, it ſerves to reproach *Paſſing away of time.*

proach idleneſs, which is, it ſeems, ſo burdenſom a thing, that even this vileſt imployment is preferred before it. But this is in many a very falſe plea. For they often ſpend time at the Pot, not only when they have nothing elſe to do, but even to the neglect of their moſt neceſſary buſineſs. However it is in all a moſt unreaſonable one, for there is no Man but he may find ſomewhat or other to imploy himſelf in. If he have little worldly buſineſs of his own, he may yet do ſomewhat to the benefit of others; but however there is no Man but hath a Soul, and if he will look carefully to that, he need not complain for want of buſineſs; where there are ſo many corruptions to mortifie, ſo many inclinations to watch over, ſo many temptations (whereof this of drunkenneſs, is not the leaſt) to reſiſt; the Graces of God to improve and ſtir up, and former neglects of all theſe to lament, ſure there can never want ſufficient employment; for all theſe require time, and ſo men at their deaths find; for thoſe that have all their lives made it their buſineſs to drive away their time, would then give all the world to redeem it. And ſure where there is much leiſure from worldly affairs, God expects to have the more time thus imployed in ſpiritual exerciſes. But it is not likely thoſe meaner ſort of Perſons, to whom this Book is intended, will be of the number of thoſe that have much leiſure, and therefore I ſhall no farther inſiſt on it, only I ſhall ſay this, that what degrees of leiſure they at any time have, it concerns them to imploy to the benefits of their Souls, and not to beſtow it to the ruine of them, as they do, who ſpend it in drinking.

Preventing reproach. 8. A ſixth end is ſaid to be the preventing of that reproach which is by the world caſt on thoſe that will in this be ſtricter than their neighbours. But in anſwer to this, I ſhall firſt ask, what is the harm of ſuch reproach? Sure it cannot equal the leaſt of thoſe miſchiefs drunkenneſs betrays us to. Nay, if we will take our Saviour's word, it is a happineſs. *Bleſſed*, ſaith he, *are ye when men ſhall revile you, and ſay all manner of evil againſt you for my ſake*, Matth. 5. 11. And S. *Peter* tells us, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. *If ye be reproached for the Name of Chriſt, happy are ye*: And ſure to be reproached for obedience to any command of Chriſt's, is to be reproached for his Name. Secondly, Let it be remembred that at our Baptiſm we ſolemnly renounced the world; and ſhall we now ſo far conſider it, as for a few ſcoffs of it to run our ſelves on all the temporal evils before mentioned; and which is much worſe, the wrath of God and eternal deſtruction? But Thirdly, if you fear reproach, why do ye do that which will bring reproach upon you from all wiſe and good Men, whoſe opinion alone is to be regarded? And it is certain, drinking is the way to bring it on you from all ſuch. And to comfort thy ſelf againſt that, by thinking thou art ſtill applauded by the fooliſh and worſt ſort of Men, is as if all the mad-men in the World ſhould agree to count themſelves the only ſober Perſons, and all others mad, which yet ſure will never make them the leſs mad, nor others the leſs ſober. Laſtly, conſider the heavy doom Chriſt hath pronounc'd on thoſe that are aſhamed of him, and ſo are all thoſe that for fear of reproach ſhall ſhrink from their obedience to him, *Mat.* 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy Angels.* There is none but will at that day deſire to be owned by Chriſt: But whoever will not here own him, that is, cleave faſt to his commands, notwithſtanding all the ſcorns, nay, perſecutions of the world, ſhall then certainly be caſt off by him. And he that will adventure thus to maintain his credit among a company of Fools and mad-men, deſerves well

to

to have it befal him: But after all this, it is not ſure that even theſe will deſpiſe thee for thy ſobriety, it is poſſible they may ſeem to do ſo to fright thee out of it; but if their hearts were ſearched, it would be found they do even againſt their wills bear a ſecret reverence to ſober Perſons, and none fall more often under their ſcorn and deſpiſing, than thoſe that run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot; for even he that ſticks not to be drunk himſelf, will yet laugh at another that he ſees ſo.

Pleaſure of the drink.

9. There is a ſeventh end, which though every Man thinks too baſe to own, yet it is too plain it prevails with many; and that is the bare pleaſure of the drink: But to theſe I confeſs it will not be fit to ſay much, for he that is come to this lamentable degree of ſottiſhneſs, is not like to receive benefit by any thing that can be ſaid: Yet let me tell even this Man, that he of all others hath the moſt means of diſcerning his fault; for this being ſuch a ground of drinking as no body will own, he is condemned of himſelf; yea, and all his fellow-drunkards too; for their denying it, is a plain ſign they acknowledge it a moſt abominable thing. And if *Eſau* were called a profane perſon, *Heb.* 12. 6. for *ſelling but his birth-right for a meſs of pottage*, and that too when he had the neceſſity of hunger upon him; what name of reproach can be bad enough for him who ſells his health, his reaſon, his God, his Soul for a cup of drink, and that when he is ſo far from needing it, that perhaps he hath already more than he can keep? I ſhall ſay no more to this ſort of Perſons, but let me warn all thoſe that go on in this ſin on any of the former grounds, that a little time will bring them even to this which they profeſs to loath; it being daily ſeen that thoſe which firſt were drawn into the ſin for the love of the company, at laſt continue in it for love of the drink.

Bargaining.

10. I can think but of one end more, that is, that of Bargaining. Men ſay it is neceſſary for them to drink, in this one reſpect of trading with their Neighbours, bargains being moſt conveniently to be ſtruck up at ſuch meetings. But this is yet a worſe end than all the reſt, for the bottom of it is an aim of cheating and defrauding others; we think when Men are in drink we ſhall the better be able to over-reach them; and ſo this adds the ſin of couſenage and defrauding to that of drunkenneſs. Now that this is indeed the intent, is manifeſt, for if it were only the diſpatch of bargains were aimed at, we ſhould chuſe to take Men with their wits about them: Therefore the taking them when drink hath diſtempered them, can be for nothing but to make advantage of them. Yet this often proves a great folly as well as a ſin; for he that drinks with another in hope to over-reach him, doth many times prove the weaker-brain'd, and becomes drunk firſt, and then he gives the other that opportunity of cheating him, which he deſigned for the cheating of the other. Now this end of drinking is ſo far from becoming an excuſe, that it is a huge heightning of the ſin; for if we may not drink intemperately upon any occaſion, much leſs upon ſo wicked an one as is the couſening and defrauding of our brethren.

Degrees of this ſin.

11. I ſuppoſe I have now ſhewed you the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe Motives, which are ordinarily brought in excuſe of this ſin. I am yet further to tell you, that it is not only that huge degree of drunkenneſs which makes Men able neither to go nor ſpeak, which is to be lookt on as a ſin, but all lower degrees, which do at all work upon the underſtanding, whether by dulling it and making it leſs fit for any imployment, or by making it too light and aiery, apt to apiſh and ridiculous mirth, or what is worſe, by inflaming Men into rage and fury. Theſe or whatever elſe make any change in the Man, are to be reckoned in to this ſin of drunkenneſs:

Nay,

Nay, further, the drinking beyond the natural ends of drinking, that is, beyond moderate refreſhment, is a ſin, though by the ſtrength of a Man's brain it makes not the leaſt change in him, and therefore thoſe that are not actually drunk, yet can ſpend whole days, or any conſiderable part of them in drinking, are ſo far from being innocent, that that greater woe belongs to them which is pronounced, *Iſa.* 5. 22. againſt thoſe that are mighty to drink. For though ſuch a man may make a ſhift to preſerve his wits, yet that wit ſerves him to very little purpoſe, when his employment is ſtill but the ſame with him that is the moſt ſottiſhly drunk, that is to pour down drink.

The great guilt of the ſtrong drinkers.

12. Nay, this man is guilty of the greateſt waſte; Firſt, of the good creatures of God; That drink which is by Gods providence intended for the refreſhing and relieving of us, is abuſed and miſ-ſpent when it is drunk beyond that meaſure which thoſe ends require; and ſure there is not the meaneſt of theſe creatures we enjoy, but the abuſe of them ſhall one day be accounted for, and he that drinks longeſt hath the moſt of that guilt. But in the ſecond place, this is a waſt of that which is much more precious, our time, which is allowed us by God to work out our Salvation in, and muſt be ſtrictly reckoned for, and therefore ought every minute of it to be moſt thriftily husbanded to that end in actions of good life; but when it is thus laid out, it tends to the direct contrary, even the working out our damnation. Beſides, he that thus drinks, though he eſcape being drunk himſelf, he is yet guilty of all the drunkenneſs that any of his company fall under; for he gives them encouragement to drink on by his Example, eſpecially if he be one of any Authority; but if he be one whoſe company the reſt are fond of, his company is then a certain enſnaring of them, for then they will drink too, rather than loſe him. There is yet a greater fault that many of theſe ſtronger brain'd drinkers are guilty of, that is, the ſetting themſelves purpoſely to make others drunk, playing, as it were, a prize at it, and counting it matter of triumph and victory to ſee others fall before them: This is a moſt horrible wickedneſs, it is the making our ſelves the Devils Factors, endeavouring all we can to draw our poor brethren into eternal miſery, by betraying them to ſo grievous a ſin; and therefore it may well be reckoned as the higheſt ſtep of this vice of drinking, as having in it the ſin of miſchieving others added to the exceſs in our ſelves. And though it be lookt upon in the world as a matter only of jeſt and merriment to make others drunk, that we may ſport our ſelves with their ridiculous behaviour, yet that mirth will have a ſad concluſion, there being a woe expreſly threatned by God to this very ſin, *Hab.* 2. 15. *Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteſt thy bottle to him, and makeſt him drunk, that thou mayeſt look on their nakedneſs:* And ſure he buys his idle paſtime very dear, that takes it with ſuch a Wo attending it.

The great miſchiefs of this ſin.

13. I have now gone through the ſeveral motives to, and degrees of this ſin of drunkenneſs, wherein I have been the more particular, becauſe it is a ſin ſo ſtrangely reigning amongſt us: No Condition, no Age, or ſcarce Sex free from it, to the great diſhonour of God, reproach of Chriſtianity, and ruine not only of our own Souls hereafter, but even of all our preſent advantages and happineſs in this life; there being no ſin which betrays each ſingle committer to more miſchiefs in his underſtanding, his health, his credit, his eſtate, than this one doth. And we have reaſon to believe this ſin is one of thoſe common crying guilts which have long lain heavy upon this Nation, and pulled down thoſe many ſad judgments we have groaned under.

14. There-

14. Therefore, Christian Reader, let me now intreat, nay, conjure thee by all that tenderness and love thou oughtest to have to the honour of God, the credit of thy Christian profession, eternal welfare of thine own Soul, the prosperity of the Church and Nation, whereof thou art a member; Nay, by that love which certainly thou hast to thy own temporal welfare, to think sadly of what hath been spoken; and then judge, whether there be any pleasure in this sin which can be any tolerable recompence for all those mischiefs it brings with it. I am confident no man in his wits can think there is, and if there be not, then be ashamed to be any longer that fool, which shall make so wretched a bargain, but begin at this instant a firm and a faithful resolution, never once more to be guilty of this swinish sin, how often soever thou hast heretofore fallen into it, and in the fear of God betake thee to a strict temperance, which when thou hast done thou wilt find thou hast made, not only a gainful but a pleasant exchange; for there is no man that hath tried both courses, but his own heart will tell him there is infinitely more present comfort and pleasure in sobriety and temperance than ever all his drunken revellings afforded him. *Exhortation to forsake it.*

15. The main difficulty is the first breaking off the custom, and that arises partly from our selves; partly from others. That from our selves may be of two sorts; the first is, when by the habit of drinking, we have brought such false thirsts upon our selves, that our bodies seem to require it, and this wants nothing but a little patience to overcome. Do but refrain some few days, and it will afterwards grow easie; for the hardness arising only from custom, the breaking off that does the business. If thou say, it is very uneasie to do so, consider, whether if thou hadst some disease which would certainly kill thee if thou didst not for some little time refrain immoderate drinking, thou wouldst not rather forbear than die. If thou wouldst not, thou art so brutish a sot that it is in vain to perswade thee; but if thou hadst, then consider how unreasonable it is for thee not to do it in this case also; the habit of drinking may well pass for a mortal disease, it proves so very often to the Body, but will most certainly to the Soul; and therefore it is madness to stick at that uneasiness in the cure of this, which thou wouldst submit to in a less danger. Set therefore but a resolute purpose to endure that little trouble for a small time, and this first difficulty is conquered, for after thou hast a while refrained, it will be perfectly easie to do so still. *The difficulties of doing so considered.* *Seeming necessity of drink.*

16. The second difficulty is that of spending the time, which those that have made drinking their trade and business, know scarce how to dispose of. But the very naming of this difficulty directs to the cure; get thee some business, somewhat to employ thy self in, which, as I have already shewed, will be easily found by all sorts of persons; but those meaner, to whom I now write, can sure never want it ready at hand, they being generally such as are to be maintained by their labour, and therefore to them I need only give this advice, to be diligent in that business they have, to follow that close as they ought; and they will have little occasion to seek out this way of spending their time. *Want of imployment.*

17. There is another sort of difficulty, which I told you arises from others, and that is either from their perswasions or reproaches. It is very likely, if thy old companions see thee begin to fall off, they will set hard to thee, to bring thee back to thy old course, they will urge to thee the unkindness of forsaking the company of thy friends, the sadness of renouncing all that mirth and jollity, which good fellows (as they call them) *Perswasions and reproaches of men.*

enjoy, and if thou canſt not thus be won, they will affright thee with the reproach of the world, and ſo try if they can mock thee out of thy ſobriety.

The means of reſiſting them. 18. The way to overcome this difficulty is to foreſee it: Therefore when thou firſt entreſt on thy courſe of temperance, thou art to make account thou ſhalt meet with theſe (perhaps many other) temptations, and that thou may'ſt make a right judgment, whether they be worthy to prevail with thee, take them before-hand and weigh them, conſider whether that falſe kindneſs that is maintained among men by drinking, be worthy to be compared with that real and everlaſting kindneſs of God, which is loſt by it; whether that fooliſh, vain mirth bear any weight with the preſent joys of a good conſcience here, or with thoſe greater of Heaven hereafter. Laſtly, whether the unjuſt reproach of wicked men, the ſhame of the world be ſo terrible, as the juſt reproof of thine own conſcience at the preſent, and that eternal confuſion of face that ſhall befal all thoſe that go on in this ſin, at the laſt day; weigh all theſe, I ſay, I need not ſay in the balance of the Sanctuary, but even in the ſcales of common reaſon, and ſure thou wilt be forced to pronounce, that the motives to temperance infinitely outweigh thoſe againſt it. When thou haſt thus adviſedly judged, then fix thy reſolution accordingly; and whenever any of theſe temptations come to ſtagger thee, remember thou haſt formerly weighed them, knoweſt the juſt value of them, and that they are a moſt unworthy price for thoſe precious advantages thou muſt give in exchange for them. And therefore hold faſt thy reſolution, and with indignation reject all motions to the contrary.

Weigh the advantages with the hurt.

Reject the temptation at the very beginning. 19. But be ſure, thou thus reject them at their very firſt tender, and do not yield in the leaſt degree; for if once thou giveſt ground, thou art loſt, the ſin will by little and little prevail upon thee. Thus we ſee many, who have profeſſed to be reſolved upon great temperance, yet for want of this care, have adventured into the company of good fellows; when they have been there, they have at the firſt been over-intreated to take a cup, after that another, till at laſt they have taken their rounds as freely as any of them, and in that floud of drink drowned all their ſober reſolutions. Therefore whoever thou art, that doſt really deſire to forſake the ſin, take care to avoid the occaſions and beginnings of it; to which end it will be good openly to declare and own thy purpoſes of ſobriety, that ſo thou mayeſt diſcourage men from aſſaulting thee. But if either thou art aſhamed to own it, or ſeemeſt to be ſo, they will quickly make uſe of that ſhame to bring thee to break it.

The ſecurity of doing ſo. 20. If thou be thus wary to keep thee from the firſt beginnings, thou art then ſure never to be overtaken with this ſin; for it is like the keeping the out-works of a beſieged City, which, ſo long as they are ſtoutly defended, there is no danger; but if they be either ſurpriſed or yielded, the City cannot long hold out. The advice therefore of the Wiſe man is very agreeable to this matter, *Eccluſ.* 19. 1. *He that deſpiſeth ſmall things ſhall periſh by little and little.* But becauſe, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *Pſalm.* 127. 1. *Except the Lord keep the City, the watch-man waketh but in vain*: Therefore to this guard of thy ſelf add thy moſt earneſt prayers to God, that he will alſo watch over thee, and by the ſtrength of his grace enable thee to reſiſt all temptations to this ſin.

The efficacy of theſe means if not hindred by love of the ſin. 21. If thou do in the ſincerity of thy heart uſe theſe means, there is no doubt but thou wilt be able to overcome this vice, how long ſoever thou haſt been accuſtomed to it; therefore if thou do ſtill remain under the power

of it, never excuſe thy ſelf by the impoſſibility of the task, but rather accuſe the falſeneſs of thy own heart, that hath ſtill ſuch a love to this ſin, that thou wilt not ſet roundly to the means of ſubduing it.

22. Perhaps the great commonneſs of the ſin and thy particular cuſtom of it may have made it ſo much thy familiar, thy boſom acquaintance, that thou art loth to entertain hard thoughts of it, very unwilling thou art to think that it means thee any hurt, and therefore art apt to ſpeak peace to thy ſelf, to hope that either this is no ſin, or at moſt but a frailty, ſuch as will not bar thee out of Heaven: but deceive not thy ſelf, for thou mayeſt as well ſay there is no Heaven, as that drunkenneſs ſhall not keep thee thence; I am ſure the ſame Word of God which tells us there is ſuch a place of happineſs, tells us alſo that drunkards are of the number of thoſe that ſhall not inherit it, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. And again, *Gal.* 5. 21. Drunkenneſs is reckoned among thoſe works of the fleſh, which they that do *ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And indeed had not theſe plain texts, yet mere reaſon would tell us the ſame, that that is a place of infinite purity, ſuch as fleſh and bloud, till it be refined and purified, is not capable of, as the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 53. and if as we are mere men, we are too groſs and impure for it, we muſt ſure be more ſo when we have changed our ſelves into Swine, the fouleſt of Beaſts, we are then prepared for the Devils to enter into, as they did into the herd, *Mark* 5. 13. and that not only ſome one or two, but a Legion; a troop and multitude of them. And of this we daily ſee examples, for where this ſin of drunkenneſs hath taken poſſeſſion, it uſually comes as an harbinger to abundance of others; each act of drunkenneſs prepares a man not only for another of the ſame ſin, but of others: Luſt and rage, and all brutiſh appetites are then let looſe, and ſo a man brings himſelf under that curſe which was the ſaddeſt *David* knew how to foretel to any, *Pſalm* 63. 8. *The falling from one wickedneſs to another.* If all this be not enough to affright thee out of this drunken fit, thou mayeſt ſtill wallow in thy vomit, continue in this ſottiſh, ſenſeleſs condition, till the flames of Hell rowſe thee, and then thou wilt by ſad experience find what now thou wilt not believe, *That the end of thoſe things*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 6. 21. *is death.* God in his infinite mercy timely awake the hearts of all that are in this ſin, that by a timely forſaking it they may *fly from the wrath to come.* I have now done with this ſecond part of Temperance, concerning Drinking.

That love makes a man loth to believe it dangerous.

SUNDAY IX.

Temperance in Sleep: The rule of it, &c. *Miſchiefs of ſloth, of Recreations, Cautions to be obſerved in them; of Apparel*, &c.

Sect. 1. THE Third part of TEMPERANCE concerns SLEEP: And Temperance in that alſo muſt be meaſured by the end for which ſleep was ordained by God, which was only the refreſhing and ſupporting of our frail Bodies, which being of ſuch a Temper that continual labour and toil tires and wearies them out, Sleep comes as a medicine to that wearineſs, as a repairer of that decay, that ſo we may be enabled to ſuch labours as the duties of Religion or works of our Calling require of us. Sleep was intended to make us more profitable, not more idle; as we give reſt to our Beaſts, not that we are pleaſed with their doing nothing, but that they may do us the better ſervice.

Sleep.

The Rule of Temperance therein.

2. By this therefore you may judge what is temperate ſleeping; to wit, that which tends to the refreſhing and making us more lively and fit for action, and to that end a moderate degree ſerves beſt. It will be impoſſible to ſet down juſt how many hours is that moderate degree, becauſe, as in eating, ſo in ſleep, ſome conſtitutions require more than others: Every mans own experience muſt in this judge for him, but then let him judge uprightly, and not conſult with his ſloth in the caſe; for that will ſtill, with *Solomon's* ſluggard, cry, *A little more ſleep, a little more ſlumber, a little more folding of the hands to ſleep*, *Prov.* 24.23. but take only ſo much as he really finds to tend to the end forementioned.

The many Sins that follow the tranſgreſſion of it.

3. He that doth not thus limit himſelf falls into ſeveral ſins under this general one of ſloth: As firſt, he waſtes his time, that precious talent which was committed to him by God to improve, which he that ſleeps away, doth like him in the Goſpel, *Matth.* 25. 18. *Hides it in the earth*, when he ſhould be trading with it; and you know what was the doom of that unprofitable ſervant, verſe 30. *Caſt ye him into outer darkneſs*: He that gives himſelf to darkneſs of ſleep here, ſhall there have darkneſs without ſleep, but with *weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* Secondly, he injures his body: Immoderate ſleep fills that full of diſeaſes, makes it a very ſink of humours, as daily experience ſhews us. Thirdly, he injures his Soul alſo, and that not only in robbing it of the ſervice of the Body, but in dulling its proper faculties, making them uſeleſs and unfit for thoſe employments to which God hath deſigned them; of all which ill husbandry the poor Soul muſt one day give account. Nay, laſtly, he affronts and deſpiſes God himſelf in it, by croſſing the very end of his creation, which was to ſerve God in an active obedience; but he that ſleeps away his life, directly thwarts and contradicts that, and when God ſaith, *Man is born to labour*, his practice ſaith the direct contrary, that man is born to reſt. Take heed therefore of giving thy ſelf to immoderate ſleep, which is the committing of ſo many ſins in one.

Other miſchiefs of ſloth.

4. But beſides the ſin of it, it is alſo very hurtful in other reſpects, it is the ſure bane of thy outward eſtate, wherein the ſluggiſh perſon ſhall never thrive; according to that obſervation of the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 23. 21. *Drowſineſs ſhall cover a man with rags*; that is, the ſlothful man ſhall want convenient cloathing; nay, indeed it can ſcarce be ſaid, that the ſluggard lives. Sleep you know is a kind of death, and he that gives himſelf up to it, what doth he but die before his time? Therefore if untimely death be to be lookt upon as a curſe, it muſt needs be a ſtrange folly to chuſe that from our own ſloth which we dread ſo much from Gods hand.

Temperance in Recreation.

5. The fourth part of Temperance concerns Recreations, which are ſometimes neceſſary both to the body and the mind of a man, neither of them being able to endure a conſtant toil without ſomewhat of refreſhment between; and therefore there is a very lawful uſe of them; but to make it ſo, it will be neceſſary to obſerve theſe Cautions.

Cautions to be obſerved in them.

6. Firſt, We muſt take care that the kind of them be lawful, that they be ſuch as have nothing of ſin in them; we muſt not to recreate our ſelves, do any thing which is diſhonourable to God, or injurious to our Neighbour, as they do who make profane or filthy backbiting diſcourſe their recreation. Secondly, we muſt take care that we uſe it with moderation: And to do ſo, we muſt firſt be ſure not to ſpend too much time upon it, but remember that the end of recreation is to fit us for buſineſs, not to be it ſelf a buſineſs to us. Secondly, we muſt not be too vehement and earneſt in it, nor ſet our hearts too much upon it, for that will both enſnare us to

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the using too much of it, and it will divert and take off our minds from our more neceſſary imployments: Like School-boys, who after a play-time, know not how to ſet themſelves to their books again. Laſtly, we muſt not ſet up to our ſelves any other end of recreations but that lawful one, of giving us moderate refreſhment.

Undue ends of Sports.

7. As firſt, we are not to uſe ſports only to paſs away our time which we ought to ſtudy how to redeem, not fling away; and when it is remembred how great a work we have here to do, the *making our calling and election ſure*, the ſecuring our title to Heaven hereafter, and how uncertain we are what time ſhall be allowed us for that purpoſe; it will appear our time is that which of all other things we ought moſt induſtriouſly to improve. And therefore ſure we have little need to contrive ways of driving that away which flies ſo faſt of it ſelf, and is ſo impoſſible to recover. Let them that can ſpend whole days and nights at Cards and Dice, and idle paſtimes conſider this, and withal, whether they ever beſtowed a quarter of that time towards that great buſineſs of their lives, for which all their time was given them, and then think what a woful reckoning they are like to make, when they come at laſt to account for that precious treaſure of their time. Secondly, we muſt not let our covetouſneſs have any thing to do in our recreations; if we play at any Game, let the end of our doing it be meerly to recreate our ſelves, not to win money, and to that purpoſe be ſure never to play for any conſiderable matter; for if thou do, thou wilt bring thy ſelf into two dangers, the one of covetouſneſs, and a greedy deſire of winning, the other of rage and anger at thy ill fortune, if thou happen to loſe: Both which will be apt to draw thee into other ſins beſides themſelves. Covetouſneſs will tempt thee to cheat and couzen in gaming, and anger to ſwearing and curſing, as common experience ſhews us too often. If thou find thy ſelf apt to fall into either of theſe in thy gaming, thou muſt either take ſome courſe to ſecure thy ſelf againſt them, or thou muſt not permit thy ſelf to play at all: For though moderate play be in it ſelf not unlawful, yet if it be the occaſion of ſin, it is ſo to thee, and therefore muſt not be ventured on. For if Chriſt commands us ſo ſtrictly to avoid temptations, that if our very eyes or hands offend us (that is, prove ſnares to us) we muſt rather part with them, than to be drawn to ſin by them: How much rather muſt we part with any of theſe unneceſſary ſports, than run the hazard of offending God by them? He that ſo plays, lays his Soul to ſtake, which is too great a prize to be played away. Beſides, he loſes all the recreation and ſport he pretends to aim at, and inſtead of that ſets himſelf to a greater toil than any of thoſe labours are he was to eaſe by it. For ſure the deſires and fears of the covetous, the impatience and rage of the angry man are more real pains than any the moſt laborious work can be.

Temperance in Apparel.

8. The laſt part of Temperance is that of APPAREL, which we are again to meaſure by the agreeableneſs to the ends for which clothing ſhould be uſed. Thoſe are eſpecially theſe three: Firſt, the hiding of nakedneſs. This was the firſt occaſion of Apparel, as you may read, *Gen.* 3. 21. and was the effect of the firſt ſin; and therefore when we remember the original of clothes, we have ſo little reaſon to be proud of them, that on the contrary we have cauſe to be humbled and aſhamed, as having loſt that innocency which was a much greater ornament than any the moſt glorious apparel can be. From this end of clothing we are likewiſe engaged to have our Apparel modeſt, ſuch as may anſwer this end of covering our ſhame: And therefore all immodeſt faſhions of Apparel, which

Apparel deſigned for covering of ſhame.

may

may either argue the wantonneſs of the wearer, or provoke that of the beholder, are to be avoided.

Fencing from cold. 9. A ſecond end of Apparel, is the fencing the body from cold, thereby to preſerve the health thereof: and this end we muſt likewiſe obſerve in our cloathing; we muſt wear ſuch kind of habits, as may keep us in that convenient warmth, which is neceſſary to our healths. And this is tranſgreſt, when out of the vanity of being in every phantaſtick faſhion, we put our ſelves in ſuch clothing as either will not defend us from cold, or is ſome other way ſo uneaſie, that it is rather a hurt than a benefit to our bodies to be ſo clad. This is a moſt ridiculous folly, and yet that which People that take a pride in their cloaths are uſually guilty of.

Diſtinction of Perſons. 10. A third end of Apparel is the diſtinguiſhing or differencing of Perſons, and that firſt, in reſpect of Sex; ſecondly, in reſpect of qualities. Firſt, clothes are to make difference of Sex; this hath been obſerved by all Nations, the habits of Men and Women have always been divers. And God himſelf expreſly provided for it among the *Jews*, by commanding that the Man ſhould not wear the Apparel of the Woman, nor the Woman of the Man. But then ſecondly, there is alſo a diſtinction of qualities to be obſerved in apparel, God hath placed ſome in a higher condition than others, and in proportion to their condition it befits their clothing to be. Gorgeous apparel, our Saviour tells us, *is for Kings Courts*, *Luke* 7. 25. Now this end of apparel ſhould alſo be obſerved. Men and Women ſhould content themſelves with that ſort of clothing which agrees to their Sex and condition, not ſtriving to exceed, and equal that of a higher rank, nor yet making it matter of envy, among thoſe of their own eſtate, vying who ſhall be fineſt: but let every man clothe himſelf in ſuch ſober attire as befits his place and calling, and not think himſelf diſparaged, if another of his neighbours have better than he.

11. And let all remember that clothes are things, which add no true worth to any, and therefore it is an intolerable vanity to ſpend any conſiderable part either of their thoughts, time or wealth upon them, or to value themſelves ever the more for them, or deſpiſe their poor brethren that want them. But if they deſire to adorn themſelves, let it be as St. *Peter* adviſeth the women of his time, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. *In the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit.* Let them clothe themſelves as richly as is poſſible with all Chriſtian vertues, and that is the raiment that will ſet them out lovely in God's eyes, yea, and in Mens too, who unleſs they be fools and Idiots, will more value thee for being good than fine; and ſure one plain Coat thou putteſt upon a poor Man's back will better become thee, than twenty rich ones thou ſhalt put upon thine own.

Too much ſparing a fault as well as exceſs. 12. I have now gone through the ſeveral parts of Temperance, I ſhall now in concluſion add this general caution, that though in all theſe particulars I have taken notice only of the one fault of exceſs, yet it is poſſible there may be one on the other hand: Men may deny their Bodies that which they neceſſarily require to their ſupport, and well-being. This is, I believe, a fault not ſo common as the other, yet we ſometimes ſee ſome very niggardly Perſons, that are guilty of it, that cannot find in their hearts to borrow ſo much from their Cheſts as may fill their bellies, or clothe their backs, and that are ſo intent upon the world, ſo moiling, and drudging in it, that they cannot afford themſelves that competent time of ſleep, or recreation, that is neceſſary. If any that hath read the former part of this Diſcourſe be of this temper, let him not comfort himſelf,

ſelf, that he is not guilty of thoſe exceſſes there complained of, and therefore conclude himſelf a good Chriſtian, becauſe he is not intemperate; for whoever is this covetous creature, his abſtaining ſhall not be counted to him as the vertue of temperance, for it is not the love of temperance, but wealth, that makes him refrain; and that is ſo far from being praiſe-worthy, that it is that great ſin which the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. *is the root of all evil*; ſuch a Mans body will one day riſe in judgment againſt him, for defrauding it of its due portion, thoſe moderate refreſhments and comforts which God hath allowed it. This is an Idolatry beyond that of offering the children to *Moloch*, *Lev.* 20. 3. they offered but their children, but this covetous wretch ſacrifices himſelf to his god Mammon, whileſt he often deſtroys his health, his life, yea, finally his Soul too, to ſave his purſe. I have now done with the ſecond head of duty, that to our ſelves, contained by the Apoſtle under the word Soberly.

SUNDAY X.

Of duties to our Neighbour. Of Juſtice, Negative, Poſitive. Of the ſin of Murder, of the hainouſneſs of it, the Puniſhments of it, and the ſtrange diſcoveries thereof. Of Maiming, &c.

Sect. 1. I COME now to the third part of Duties, thoſe to our NEIGHBOUR, which are by the Apoſtle ſummed up in groſs in the word [Righteouſneſs] by which is meant not only bare Juſtice, but all kind of Charity alſo, for that is now by the law of Chriſt become a debt to our Neighbour, and it is a piece of unrighteouſneſs to defraud him of it. I ſhall therefore build all the particular duties we owe to our Neighbour, on thoſe two general ones, Juſtice and Charity. *Duty to our Neighbour.*

2. I begin with JUSTICE, whereof there are two parts, the one Negative, the other Poſitive: The negative Juſtice is to do no wrong, or injury to any. The poſitive Juſtice is to do right to all; that is, to yield them whatſoever appertains or is due unto them. I ſhall firſt ſpeak of the Negative Juſtice, the not injuring or wronging any. Now becauſe a Man is capable of receiving wrong in ſeveral reſpects; this firſt part of Juſtice extends it ſelf into ſeveral branches, anſwerable to thoſe capacities of injury. A Man may be injured either in his Soul, his Body, his Poſſeſſions, or Credit; and therefore this duty of Negative Juſtice lays a reſtraint on us in every of theſe: That we do no wrong to any Man in reſpect either of his Soul, his Body, his Poſſeſſions, or his Credit. *Juſtice.* *Negative.*

3. Firſt, this Juſtice ties us to do no hurt to his Soul; and here my firſt work muſt be to examine what harm it is that the Soul can receive; it is, we know, an inviſible ſubſtance which we cannot reach with our eye, much leſs with our ſwords and weapons, yet for all that it is capable of being hurt and wounded; and that even to death. *To the Soul.*

4. Now the Soul may be conſidered either in a natural or ſpiritual ſence; in the natural it ſignifies that which we uſually call the mind of a man, and this, we all know, may be wounded with grief or ſadneſs, as *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 15. 13. *By ſorrow of heart the ſpirit is broken.* Therefore whoever doth cauſleſly afflict or grieve his Neighbour, he tranſgreſſes this part of juſtice, and hurts and wrongs his Soul. This ſort of injury malicious and ſpiteful Men are very often guilty of; they will do things, by which themſelves reap no good, nay, often much harm, only that they may vex and grieve another; this is a moſt ſavage, inhumane humour, *In the natural ſenſe.*

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thus to take pleaſure in the ſadneſs and afflictions of others; and whoever harbours it in his heart, may truly be ſaid to be poſſeſt with a Devil, for it is the nature only of thoſe accurſed ſpirits to delight in the miſeries of Men; and till that be caſt out, they are fit only to dwell as the poſſeſt perſon did, *Mark* 5. 2. *Among graves and tombs*, where there are none capable of receiving affliction by them.

In the ſpiritual. 5. But the Soul may be conſidered alſo in the ſpiritual ſence, and ſo it ſignifies that immortal part of us which muſt live eternally, either in bliſs or woe in another world. And the Soul thus underſtood is capable of two ſorts of harm: Firſt, that of ſin: Secondly, that of puniſhment; the latter whereof is certainly the conſequent of the former; and therefore though God be the inflicter of puniſhment, yet ſince it is but the effect of ſin, we may juſtly reckon, that he that draws a man to ſin, is likewiſe the betrayer of him to puniſhment, as he that gives a Man a mortal wound, is the cauſe of his death; therefore under the evil of ſin both are contained, ſo that I need ſpeak only of that.

Drawing to ſin the greateſt injury. 6. And ſure there cannot be a higher ſort of wrong, than the bringing this great evil upon the Soul. Sin is the diſeaſe and wound of the Soul, as being the direct contrary to Grace; which is the health and ſoundneſs of it: Now this wound we give to every Soul, whom we do by any means whatſoever draw into ſin.

Direct means of it 7. The ways of doing that are divers, I ſhall mention ſome of them, whereof though ſome are more direct than others, yet all tend to the ſame end. Of the more direct ones there is, firſt, the commanding of ſin, that is, when a Perſon that hath power over another ſhall require him to do ſomething which is unlawful; an example of this we have in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s commanding the worſhip of the golden Image, *Dan.* 3. 4. and his copy is imitated by any Parent or Maſter, who ſhall require of his child or ſervant to do any unlawful act. Secondly, there is counſelling of ſin, when Men adviſe and perſwade others to any wickedneſs: Thus *Job*'s Wife counſelled her husband to curſe God, *Job* 2. 7. And *Achitophel* adviſed *Abſalom* to go in to his Father's Concubines, 2 *Sam.* 16 21. Thirdly, there is enticing and alluring to ſin, by ſetting before Men the pleaſures or profits they ſhall reap by it. Of this ſort of enticement *Solomon* gives warning, *Prov.* 1. 10. *My ſon if ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not; if they ſay, Come with us, let us lay wait for bloud, let us lurk privily for the innocent without a cauſe*, &c. and Verſe the 13. you may ſee what is the bait, by which they ſeek to allure them, *We ſhall find all precious ſubſtance; we ſhall fill our houſes with ſpoil. Caſt in thy lot among us, let us all have one purſe.* Fourthly, there is aſſiſtance in ſin; that is, when Men aid and help others either in contriving or acting a ſin. Thus *Jonadab* helpt *Amnon* in plotting the Raviſhing of his Siſter, 2 *Sam.* 13. All theſe are direct means of bringing this great evil of ſin upon our brethren.

Indirect. 8. There are alſo others, which though they ſeem more indirect, may yet be as effectual towards that ill end, as firſt, example in ſin; he that ſets others an ill pattern, does his part to make them imitate it, and too often it hath that effect; there being generally nothing more forcible to bring Men into any ſinful practice, than the ſeeing it uſed by others, as might be inſtanced in many ſins, to which there is no other temptation, but their being in faſhion. Secondly, there is incouragement in ſin, when either by approving, or elſe at leaſt by not ſhewing a diſlike, we give others confidence to go on in their wickedneſs. A third means is by juſtifying and defending any ſinful act of anothers, for by that we do not only

only confirm him in his evil, but endanger the drawing others to the like, who may be the more inclinable to it, when they shall hear it so pleaded for. Lastly, the bringing up any reproach upon strict and Christian living, as those do who have the ways of God in derision; this is a means to affright Men from the practice of duty, when they see it will bring them to be scorned and despised; this is worse than all the former, not only in respect of the Man who is guilty of it (as it is an evidence of the great prophaneness of his own heart) but also in regard of others, it having a more general ill effect than any of the former can have; it being the betraying men, not only to some single acts of disobedience to Christ, but even to the casting off all subjection to him; by all these means we may draw on our selves this great guilt of injuring and wounding the souls of our brethren.

Men sadly to consider whom they have thus injured.

9. It would be too long for me to instance in all the several sins, in which it is usual for Men to ensnare others; as drunkenness, uncleanness, rebellion, and a multitude more. But it will concern every Man for his own particular, to consider sadly what mischiefs of this kind he hath done to any, by all, or any of these means, and to weigh well the greatness of the injury. Men are apt to boast of their innocency towards their neighbours, that they have done wrong to no man; but God knows, many that thus brag, are of all others the most injurious persons: perhaps they have not maimed his body, nor stoln his goods: but alas! the body is but the case and cover of the man, and the goods some appurtenances to that, 'tis the soul is the man, and that they can wound and pierce without remorse, and yet with the adulteress, *Prov.* 30. 20. say, *They have done no wickedness*; but glory of their friendly behaviour to those whom they thus betray to eternal ruine; for whomsoever thou hast drawn to any sin, thou hast done thy part to ascertain to those endless flames. And then think with thy self how base a treachery this is: thou wouldst call him a treacherous villain, that should while he pretends to embrace a Man, secretly stab him: but this of thine is as far beyond that, as the Soul is of more value than the Body; and Hell worse than Death. And remember yet farther, that besides the cruelty of it to thy poor Brother, it is also most dangerous to thy self, it being that against which Christ hath pronounced a woe, *Mat.* 18. 7. and verse 6. he tells us that *whoever shall offend* (that is, draw into sin) *any of those little ones, it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the Sea.* Thou mayest plunge thy poor Brother into perdition: but as it is with wrestlers, he that gives another a fall, commonly falls with him, so thou art like to bear him company to that place of torment.

Heartily to bewail it.

10. Let therefore thy own and his danger beget in thee a sense of the greatness of this sin, this horrid piece of injustice to the precious soul of thy Neighbour. Bethink thy self seriously to whom thou hast been thus cruel; whom thou hast enticed to drinking, advised to rebellion, allur'd to lust, stirr'd up to rage, whom thou hast assisted or incouraged in any ill course, or discouraged and disheartned by thy prophane scoffings at piety in general, or at any conscionable strict walking of his in particular; and then draw up a bill of indictment; accuse and condemn thy self as a *Cain*, a murtherer of thy brother, heartily and deeply bewail all thy guilts of this kind, and resolve never once more to be a stumbling-block, as St. *Paul* calls it, *Rom.* 14. in thy brothers way.

Endeavour to repair it.

11. But this is not all, there must be some fruits of this repentance brought forth; now in all sins of injustice, restitution is a necessary fruit

of repentance, and ſo it is here, thou haſt committed an act (perhaps many) of high injuſtice to the ſoul of thy brother; thou haſt robbed it of its innocency, of its title to Heaven, thou muſt now endeavour to reſtore all this to it again, by being more earneſt and induſtrious to win him to repentance, than ever thou wert to draw him to ſin: uſe now as much art to convince him of the danger, as ever thou didſt to flatter him with the pleaſures of his Vice; in a word, countermine thy ſelf by uſing all thoſe methods and means to recover him, that thou didſt to deſtroy him, and be more diligent and zealous in it, for 'tis neceſſary thou ſhouldeſt, both in regard of him and thy ſelf. Firſt, in reſpect of him, becauſe there is in Mans nature ſo much a greater promptneſs and readineſs to evil than to good, that there will need much more pains and diligence to inſtil the one into him, than the other: beſides, the Man is ſuppoſed to be already accuſtomed to the contrary, which will add much to the difficulty of the work. Then in reſpect of thy ſelf; if thou be a true penitent, thou wilt think thy ſelf obliged, as S. *Paul* did, *To labour more abundantly*, and wilt be aſhamed, that when thou art trading for God, bringing back a Soul to him, thou ſhouldeſt not purſue it with more earneſtneſs than while thou wert an agent of Satans; beſides, the remembrance that thou wert a means of bringing this poor Soul into this ſnare muſt neceſſarily quicken thy diligence to get him out of it. So much for the firſt part of negative Juſtice, in reſpect of the Souls of our brethren.

Negative juſtice to the body.

In reſpect of the life.

12. The ſecond concerns the bodies, and to thoſe alſo this juſtice binds thee to do no wrong nor violence. Now of wrongs to the body there may be ſeveral degrees, the higheſt of them is killing, taking away the life; this is forbid in the very letter of the ſixth Commandment; *Thou ſhalt do no murder.*

Several ways of being guilty of Murder.

13. Murder may be committed either by open violence; when a man either by ſword, or any other Inſtrument takes away anothers life, immediately and directly; or it may be done ſecretly and treacherouſly, as *David* murdered *Uriah*, not with his own Sword, but with the Sword of the Children of *Ammon*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 17. And *Jezebel Naboth* by a falſe accuſation, 1 *Kings* 21. 13. And ſo divers have committed this ſin of murder by poyſon, falſe-witneſs, or ſome ſuch concealed ways. The former is commonly the effect of a ſudden rage, the latter hath ſeveral originals; ſometimes it proceeds from ſome old malice fixt in the heart towards the Perſon; ſometimes from ſome covetous or ambitious deſires; ſuch an one ſtands in a Man's way to his profit or preferment, and therefore he muſt be removed; and ſometimes again it is to cover ſhame, as in the caſe of Strumpets, that murther their Infants that they may not betray their filthineſs. But beſides theſe more direct ways of killing, there is another, and that is, when by our perſwaſions and enticements we draw a Man to do that which tends to the ſhortning of his life, and is apparent to do ſo; he that makes his neighbour drunk, if by that drunkenneſs the Man comes to any mortal hurt, which he would have eſcaped if he had been ſober, he that made him drunk is not clear of his death; or if he die not by any ſuch ſudden accident, yet if drinking caſt him into a diſeaſe, and that diſeaſe kill him, I know not how he that drew him to that exceſs can acquit himſelf of his murder in the eyes of God, though humane Laws touch him not. I wiſh thoſe who make it their buſineſs to draw in cuſtomers to that trade of debauchery, would conſider it. There is yet another way of bringing this guilt upon our ſelves, and that is by inciting and ſtirring up others to it, or to that degree of anger and revenge which produces it; and

he

he that ſets two Perſons at variance, or ſeeing them already ſo, blows the coals, if murder enſue, he certainly hath his ſhare in the guilt, which is a conſideration that ought to affright all from having any thing to do in the kindling or increaſing of contention.

14. Now for the hainouſneſs of this ſin of Murther, I ſuppoſe none can be ignorant, that it is of the deepeſt die, a moſt loud crying ſin. This we may ſee in the firſt act of this kind, that ever was committed, *Abels* bloud cryeth from the earth, as God tells *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 10. Yea, the guilt of this ſin is ſuch, that it leaves a ſtain even upon the Land where it is committed, ſuch as is not to be waſht out, but by the bloud of the Murtherer; as appears, *Deut.* 19. 12, 13. The Land cannot be purged of bloud, but by the bloud of him that ſhed it; and therefore though in other caſes the flying to the Altar ſecured a Man, yet in this of wilful murder no ſuch refuge was allowed, but ſuch a one was to be taken even thence, and delivered up to Juſtice, *Exod.* 21. 14. *Thou ſhalt take him from my Altar that he may die.* And it is yet farther obſervable, that the only two Precepts which the Scripture mentions, as given to *Noah* after the flood, were both in relation to this ſin; that of not eating bloud, *Gen.* 9. 4. being a ceremony, to beget in Men a greater horrour of this ſin of Murder, and ſo intended for the preventing of it. The other was for the puniſhment of it, *Gen.* 9. 6. *He that ſheddeth mans bloud, by man ſhall his bloud be ſhed*; and the reaſon of this ſtrictneſs is added in the next words, *For in the Image of God made he man*; where you ſee that this ſin is not only an injury to our brother, but even the higheſt contempt and deſpite towards God himſelf, for it is the defacing of his Image, which he hath ſtamped upon Man. Nay yet further, it is the uſurping of Gods proper right and authority. For it is God alone, that hath right to diſpoſe of the life of Man; 'twas he alone that gave it, and it is he alone that hath power to take it away; but he that murders a Man, does, as it were, wreſt this power out of God's hand, which is the higheſt pitch of rebellious preſumption.

The hainouſneſs of the ſin.

15. And as the ſin is great, ſo likewiſe is the puniſhment; we ſee it frequently very great, and remarkable, even in this World, (beſides thoſe moſt fearful effects of it in the next) bloud not only cries, but it cries for vengeance, and the great God of recompences, as he ſtiles himſelf, will not fail to hear it: very many examples the Scripture gives us of this: *Ahab* and *Jezebel*, that murdered innocent *Naboth*, for greedineſs of his Vineyard, were themſelves ſlain, and the Dogs licked their bloud in the place where they had ſhed his, as you may read in that Story; ſo *Abſalom* that ſlew his brother *Amnon*, after he had committed that ſin, fell into another, that of rebellion againſt his King and Father, and in it miſerably periſhed. *Rachab* and *Baanah*, that ſlew *Iſhboſheth*, were themſelves put to death, and that by the very perſon they thought to endear by it. Many more inſtances might be given of this out of the Sacred Story, and many alſo out of Humane, there having been no age but hath yielded multitudes of examples of this kind, ſo that every man may furniſh himſelf out of the obſervations of his own time.

The great puniſhment attending it.

16. And it is worth our notice, what ſtrange and even miraculous means it hath often pleaſed God to uſe for the diſcovery of this ſin; the very brute creatures have often been made inſtruments of it; nay, often the extreme horror of a man's own conſcience hath made him betray himſelf: ſo that it is not any cloſeneſs a man uſes in the acting of this ſin, that can ſecure him from the vengeance of it, for he can never ſhut out his own conſcience, that will in ſpight of him be privy to the fact, and that very

The ſtrange diſcoveries of it.

often proves the means of discovering it to the world; or if it should not do that, yet it will sure act revenge on him, it will be such a Hell within him as will be worse than death: This we have seen in many, who after the commission of this sin have never been able to enjoy a minutes rest, but have had that intolerable anguish of mind, that they have chosen to be their own murderers rather than live in it. These are the usual effects of this sin even in this world, but those in another are yet more dreadful, where surely the highest degrees of torment belong to this high pitch of wickedness: For if, as our Saviour tells us, *Matt.*5.22. Hell fire be the portion of him that shall but call his brother fool, what degree of those burnings can we think proportionable to this so much greater an injury?

We must watch diligently against all approaches of this sin.

17. The consideration of all this ought to possess us with the greatest horror, and abomination of this sin, and to make us extremely watchful of our selves, that we never fall into it, and to that end to prevent all those occasions which may insensibly draw us into this Pit. I mentioned at first several things which are wont to be originals of it, and at those we must begin, if we will surely guard our selves. If therefore thou wilt be sure never to kill a man in thy rage, be sure never to be in that rage, for if thou permittest thy self to that, thou canst have no security against the other, anger being a madness that suffers us not to consider, or know what we do, when it has once possest us. Therefore when thou findest thy self begin to be inflamed, think betimes whither this may lead thee, if thou lettest loose to it, and immediately put the bridle upon this head-strong passion; so again, if thou wilt be sure thy malice shall not draw thee to it, be sure never to harbour one malicious thought in thy heart, for if it once settle there, it will gather such strength, that within a while thou wilt be perfectly under the power of it, so that it may lead thee even to this horrible sin at its pleasure; be therefore careful at the very first approach of this treacherous guest, to shut the doors against it, never to let it enter thy mind; so also if thou wilt be sure thy covetousness, thy ambition, thy lust, or any other sinful desire shall not betray thee to it, be sure thou never permit any of them to bear any sway with thee, for if they get the dominion, as they will soon do, if they be once entertained in the heart, they will be past thy controul, and hurry thee to this or any other sin, that may serve their ends. In like manner, If thou wouldest not be guilty of any of the mortal effects of thy Neighbours drunkenness, be sure not to entice him to it, nor accompany him at it, and to that purpose do not allow thy self in the same practice, for if thou do, thou wilt be labouring to get company at it. Lastly, if thou wilt not be guilty of the murder committed by another, take heed thou never give any incouragement to it, or contribute any thing to that hatred, or contention, that may be the cause of it. For when thou hast either kindled or blowed the fire, what knowest thou whom it may consume? Bring always as much water as thou canst to quench, but never bring one drop of oil to encrease the flame. The like may be said of all other occasions of this sin not here mentioned; and this careful preserving our selves from these, is the only sure way to keep us from this sin: Therefore as ever thou wouldst keep thy self innocent from the great offence, guard thee warily from all such in-lets, those steps and approaches towards it.

Maiming a great injury.

18. But although murder be the greatest, yet it is not the only injury that may be done to the body of our Neighbour; there are others which are also of a very high nature; the next in degree to this is Maiming him, depriving him of any member, or at least of the use of it, and this is a very great

great wrong and miſchief to him as we may diſcern by the Judgment of God himſelf, in the caſe of the bond-ſervant, who ſhould by his Maſters means loſe a member, *Exod.* 21. 26. the freedom of his whole life was thought but a reaſonable recompence for it. *He ſhall let him go free*, ſaith the Text, *for his eye*; nay, though it were a leſs conſiderable part, if it were but a tooth, which of all other may be loſt with the leaſt damage, yet the ſame amends was to be made him, *verſe* 27.

That which every man dreads for himſelf.

19. But we need no other way of meaſuring this injury, than the judgment of every man in his own caſe; how much does every man dread the loſs of a limb? So that if he be by any accident or diſeaſe, in danger of it, he thinks no pains or coſt too much to preſerve it. And then how great an injuſtice, how contrary to that great rule of *doing as we would be done to*, is it, for a man to do that to another, which he ſo unwillingly ſuffers himſelf?

Yet worſe if the man be poor.

But if the perſon be poor, one that muſt labour for his living, the injury is yet greater, it is ſuch as may in effect amount to the former ſin of murder; for as the Wiſe man ſays, *Ecclus.* 24. 21. *The poor mans bread is his life, and he that deprives them thereof is a bloud-ſhedder.* And therefore he that deprives him of the means of getting his bread, by diſabling him from labour, is ſurely no leſs guilty. In the law it was permitted to every man that had ſuſtained ſuch a damage by his Neighbour, to require the Magiſtrate to inflict the like on him, *eye for eye, tooth for tooth*, as it is *Exod.* 21. 24.

Neceſſity of making what ſatisfaction we can.

20. And though unprofitable revenge be not now allowed to us Chriſtians, yet ſure it is the part of every one who hath done this injury, to make what ſatisfaction lies in his power; 'tis true he cannot reſtore a limb again (which by the way ſhould make men wary how they do thoſe miſchiefs which it is ſo impoſſible for them to repair) but yet he may ſatisfie for ſome of the ill effects of that loſs. If that have brought the man to want and penury, he may, nay he muſt, if he have but the leaſt ability, relieve and ſupport him, yea, though it be by his own extraordinary labour: For if it be a duty of us all to be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, as *Job* ſpeaks, much more muſt we be ſo to them whom our ſelves have made blind and lame. Therefore whoever hath done this injury to any of his poor brethren, let him know he is bound to do all that is poſſible towards the repairing of it; if he do not, every new ſuffering that the poor mans wants bring upon him, becomes a new charge and accuſation againſt him, at the tribunal of the juſt Judge.

Wounds and ſtripes injuries alſo.

21. There are yet other degrees of injury to the body of our Neighbour. I ſhall mention only two more, Wounds and Stripes; a man may wound another, which though it finally cauſe loſs neither of life nor limb, is yet an endangering of both; and the like may be ſaid of ſtripes; both of which however are very painful at the preſent, nay perhaps very long after; and pain, of all temporal evils, is to be accounted the greateſt, for it is not only an evil in it ſelf, but it is ſuch an one, that permits us not, whilſt we are under it, to enjoy any other good; a man in pain having no taſte of any the greateſt delights: If any man deſpiſe theſe, as light injuries, let him again ask himſelf, how he would like it, to have his own body ſlaſht or bruiſed, and put to paſs under thoſe painful means of cure, which are many times neceſſary in ſuch caſes? I preſume there is no man would willingly undergo this from another, and why then ſhouldeſt thou offer it to him?

22. The

This cruelty to others the effect of pride.

22. The truth is, this ſtrange cruelty to others is the effect of a great pride, and haughtineſs of heart: We look upon others with ſuch contempt, that we think it no matter how they are uſed; we think they muſt bear blows from us, when in the mean time we are ſo tender of our ſelves, that we cannot hear the leaſt word of diſparagement, but we are all on a flame. The provocations to theſe injuries are commonly ſo ſlight, that did not this inward pride diſpoſe us to ſuch an angrineſs of humour, that we take fire at every thing, it were impoſſible we ſhould be moved by them. Nay, ſome are advanced to ſuch a wantonneſs of cruelty, that without any provocation at all, in cool bloud, as they ſay, they can thus wrong their poor brethren, and make it part of their paſtime and recreation to cauſe pain to others. Thus ſome tyrannous humours take ſuch a pleaſure in tormenting thoſe under their power, that they are glad when they can but find a pretence to puniſh them, and then do it without all moderation: And others will ſet men together by the ears, only that they may have the ſport of ſeeing the ſcuffle; like the old *Romans*, that made it one of their publick ſports to ſee men kill one another; and ſure we have as little Chriſtianity as they, if we can take delight in ſuch ſpectacles.

23. This ſavageneſs and cruelty of mind is ſo unbecoming the nature of a man, that he is not allowed to uſe it even to his Beaſt; how intolerable is it then towards thoſe, that are of the ſame nature, and which is more, are heirs of the ſame eternal hopes with us? They that ſhall thus tranſgreſs againſt their Neighbours in any of the foregoing particulars, or whatever elſe is hurtful to the body, are unjuſt perſons, want even this loweſt ſort of juſtice, the Negative to their Neighbours, in reſpect of their bodies.

24. Neither can any man excuſe himſelf by ſaying what he has done was only in return of ſome injury offered him by the other; for ſuppoſe it be ſo, that he have indeed received ſome conſiderable wrong, yet cannot he be his own revenger without injury to that man, who is not, by being thine enemy, become thy vaſſal, or ſlave, to do with him what thou liſt; thou haſt never the more right of dominion over him, becauſe he hath done thee wrong, and therefore if thou hadſt no power over his body before, 'tis certain thou haſt none now, and therefore thou art not only uncharitable (which yet were ſin enough to damn thee) but unjuſt in every act of violence thou doſt to him. Nay, this injuſtice aſcends higher, even to God himſelf, who hath reſerved vengeance as his own peculiar right. *Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord, Rom.* 12. 19. and then he that will act revenge for himſelf, what does he, but incroach upon this ſpecial right and prerogative of God, ſnatch the ſword, as it were out of his hand, as if he knew better how to wield it? Which is at once a robbery, and contempt of the Divine Majeſty.

SUNDAY XI.

Of Juſtice about the poſſeſſions of our Neighbour; againſt injuring him, as concerning his Wife, his Goods. Of Oppreſſion, Theft. Of paying of Debts, &c.

His poſſeſſions.

Sect. 1. THE third part of Negative Juſtice concerns the poſſeſſions of our Neighbours; what I mean by Poſſeſſions, I cannot better explain than by referring you to the Tenth Commandment, the end of which is to bridle all covetous appetites and deſires towards the Poſſeſſions of

of our Neighbour. There we find reckoned up, not only his Houſe, Servants and Cattle, which may all paſs under the one general name of his Goods or Riches, but particularly his Wife, as a principal part of his poſſeſſions, and therefore when we conſider this duty of Negative Juſtice, in reſpect of the poſſeſſions of our Neighbour, we muſt apply it to both, his Wife as well as his Goods.

His wife.

2. The eſpecial and peculiar right that every man hath in his Wife is ſo well known, that it were vain to ſay any thing in proof of it; the great impatience that every husband hath to have this right of his invaded, ſhews that it is ſufficiently underſtood in the world, and therefore none that does this injury to another, can be ignorant of the greatneſs of it. The corrupting of a mans Wife, enticing her to a ſtrange bed, is by all acknowledged to be the worſt ſort of Theft, infinitely beyond that of the Goods.

The enticing a mans wife the greateſt injuſtice.

3. Indeed there is in this one, a heap of the greateſt injuſtices together; ſome towards the woman, and ſome towards the man: Towards the woman there are the greateſt imaginable; it is that injuſtice to her Soul, which was before mentioned as the higheſt of all others, 'tis the robbing her of her innocency, and ſetting her in a courſe of the horridſt wickedneſs (no leſs than luſt and perjury together) from which it is probable ſhe may never return, and then it proves the damning of her eternally. Next it is in reſpect of this world the robbing her of her credit, making her abhorred and deſpiſed, and her very name a reproach among all men; and beſides, it is the depriving her of all that happineſs of life, which ariſes from the mutual kindneſs and affection that is between man and wife, inſtead whereof this brings in a loathing and abhorring of each other, from whence flow multitudes of miſchiefs, too many to rehearſe, in all which the man hath his ſhare alſo.

To the woman.

To the man.

4. But beſides thoſe, there are to him many and high injuſtices; for it is firſt the robbing him of that, which of all other things he accounts moſt precious, the love and faithfulneſs of his wife, and that alſo wherein he hath ſuch an incommunicable right, that himſelf cannot, if he would, make it over to any other; and therefore ſure it cannot without the utmoſt injuſtice be torn from him by any. Nor is this all, but it is farther the ingulfing him (if ever he come to diſcern it) in that moſt tormenting paſſion of jealouſie, which is of all others the moſt painful, and which oft puts men upon the moſt deſperate attempts, it being as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* 6. 34. *The rage of a man.* It is yet farther, the bringing upon him all that ſcorn and contempt which by the unjuſt meaſures of the world falls on them, which are ſo abuſed, and which is by many eſteemed the moſt inſufferable part of the wrong; and though it be true, that it is very unjuſt he ſhould fall under reproach, only becauſe he is injured, yet unleſs the world could be new moulded, it will certainly be his lot, and therefore it adds much to the injury. Again, this may indeed be a robbery in the uſual ſenſe of the word, for perhaps it may be the thruſting in the child of the Adulterer into his family, to ſhare both in the maintenance and portions of his own children; and this is an arrand theft: Firſt, in reſpect of the man, who ſurely intends not the providing for another mans child, and then in reſpect of the children, who are by that means defrauded of ſo much as that goes away with. And therefore whoſoever hath this circumſtance of the ſin to repent of, cannot do it effectually, without reſtoring to the family, as much as he hath by this means robb'd it of.

5. All

The most irreparable. 5. All this put together will ſure make this the greateſt and moſt provoking injury that can be done to a man, and (which heightens it yet more) it is that, for which a man can never make reparations; for unleſs it be in the circumſtance before mentioned, there is no part of this ſin, wherein that can be done; to this purpoſe it is obſervable in the Jewiſh Law, that the Thief was appointed to reſtore fourfold, and that freed him; but the Adulterer having no poſſibility of making any reſtitution, any ſatisfaction, he muſt pay his life for his offence, *Lev.* 20. 10. And though now adays Adulterers ſpeed better, live many days to renew their guilt, and perhaps to laugh at thoſe, whom they have thus injured, yet let them be aſſured, there muſt one day be a ſad reckoning, and that whether they repent or not; If by Gods grace they do come to repentance, they will then find this to be no cheap ſin, many anguiſhes of Soul, terrors and perplexities of Conſcience, groans and tears it muſt coſt them; and indeed were a man's whole life ſpent in theſe penitential exerciſes, 'twere little enough to wipe off the guilt of any one ſingle act of this kind; what overwhelming ſorrows then are requiſite for ſuch a trade of this ſin, as too many drive? Certainly it is ſo great a task, that it is highly neceſſary for all that are ſo concerned, to ſet to it immediately, leſt they want time to go through with it; for let no man flatter himſelf, that the guilt of a courſe and habit of ſuch a ſin can be waſht away with a ſingle act of repentance, no, he muſt proportion the repentance to the fault, and as one hath been a habit and courſe, ſo muſt the other alſo. And then how ſtrange a madneſs is it for men to run into this ſin, (and that with ſuch painful purſuits, as many do) which he knows muſt at the beſt hand, that is, ſuppoſing he do repent of it, coſt him thus dear? But then if he do not repent, infinitely dearer: It loſes him all his title to Heaven, that place of purity, and gives him his portion in the lake of fire, where the burnings of his luſt ſhall end in thoſe everlaſting burnings; For how cloſely ſoever he hath acted this ſin, be it ſo that he may have ſaid with the Adulterer in *Job* 25. 15. *No eye ſeeth me*, yet 'tis ſure he could not in the greateſt obſcurity ſhelter himſelf from Gods ſight, with whom *the darkneſs is no darkneſs*, *Pſalm* 139. 12. And he it is, who hath expreſly threatned to judge this ſort of offenders, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Adulterers God will judge.* God grant that all that live in this foul guilt, may ſo ſeaſonably, and ſo throughly judge themſelves, that they may prevent that ſevere and dreadful judgment of his.

His goods. 6. The ſecond thing to which this Negative Juſtice to our Neighbours poſſeſſions reacheth, is his Goods, under which general word is contained all thoſe ſeveral ſorts of things, as Houſe, Land, Cattle, Money, and the like, in which he hath a right and property; theſe we are by the rule of this juſtice to ſuffer him to enjoy without ſeeking, either to work him damage in any of them, or to get any of them to our ſelves: I make a difference between theſe two, becauſe there may be two ſeveral grounds or motives of this injuſtice; the one malice, the other covetouſneſs.

Malicious injuſtice. 7. The malicious man deſires to work his Neighbours miſchief, though he get nothing by it himſelf; 'tis frequently ſeen that men will make havock and ſpoil of the goods of one, to whom they bear a grudge, though they never deſign to get any thing to themſelves by it, but only the pleaſure of doing a ſpite to the other. This is a moſt helliſh humour, directly anſwerable to that of the Devil, who beſtows all his pains and induſtry not to bring in any good to himſelf, but only to ruine and undo others: And how contrary it is to all rules of juſtice, you may ſee by the Precept

given

given by God to the Jews concerning the goods of an enemy; where they were ſo far from being allowed a liberty of ſpoil and deſtruction, that they are expreſly bound to prevent it, *Exod.* 23. 4, 5. *If thou meet thine enemies Ox, or his Aſs going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back to him again: If thou ſee the Aſs of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldſt forbear to help him, thou ſhalt ſurely help with him:* Where you ſee it is a debt we owe to our very enemies, to prevent that loſs and damage, which by any accident he is in danger of: And that even with ſome labour and pains to our ſelves. How horrible an injuſtice is it then, purpoſely to bring that loſs and damage on him? Whoever is guilty of this, let him never excuſe himſelf by ſaying, he hath not enricht himſelf by the ſpoil of his Neighbour, that he hath nothing of it cleaves to his finger, for ſure this malicious injuſtice is no leſs a fault than the covetous one; nay, I ſuppoſe in reſpect of the principle and cauſe from which it flows, it may be greater, this hatred of another being worſe than the immoderate love of our ſelves; whoever hath thus miſchieft his Neighbour, he is as much bound to repair the injury, to make ſatisfaction for the loſs, as if he had enriched himſelf by it.

Covetous injuſtice.

8. But on the other ſide, let not the covetous defrauder therefore judge his ſin light, becauſe there is another, that in ſome one reſpect out-weighs it, for perhaps in others his may caſt the ſcales; certainly it does in this one, that he that is unjuſt for greedineſs of gain, is like to multiply more acts of this ſin, than he that is ſo out of malice; for 'tis impoſſible any man ſhould have ſo many objects of his malice, as he may have of his covetouſneſs; there is no man at ſo general a defiance with all mankind, that he hates every body; but the covetous man hath as many objects of his vice, as there be things in the world he counts valuable. But I ſhall not longer ſtand upon this compariſon, 'tis ſure they are both great and crying ſins, and that is ground enough of abhorring each: Let us deſcend now to the ſeveral branches of this ſort of Covetous injuſtice; 'tis true they may all bear the name of robbery, or theft, for in effect they are all ſo, yet for methods ſake, it will not be amiſs to diſtinguiſh them into theſe three; Oppreſſion, Theft, and Deceit.

Oppreſſion.

9. By Oppreſſion I mean that open and bare-faced robbery, of ſeizing upon the poſſeſſions of others, and owning and avowing the doing ſo. For the doing of this there are ſeveral inſtruments; as firſt, that of power, by which many Nations and Princes have been turned out of their rights, and many private Men out of their Eſtates: Sometimes again, Law is made the inſtrument of it; he that covets his Neighbours lands or goods, pretends a claim to them, and then by corrupting of Juſtice by Bribes and Gifts, or elſe over-ruling it by greatneſs and authority, gets judgment on his ſide: This is a high oppreſſion, and of the worſt ſort, thus to make the Law, which was intended for the protection and defence of mens Rights, to be the means of overthrowing them; and it is a very heavy guilt, that lies both on him that procures, and on him that pronounces ſuch a ſentence, yea, and on the Lawyer too, that pleads ſuch a cauſe, for by ſo doing he aſſiſts in the oppreſſion. Sometimes again, the very neceſſities of the oppreſſed are the means of his oppreſſion, thus it is in the caſe of Extortion, and griping Uſury: A Man is in extreme want of Money, and this gives opportunity to the Extortioner to wreſt unconſcionably from him, to which the poor Man is forced to yield, to ſupply his preſent wants. And thus alſo it is often with exacting Land-lords, who, when their poor Tenants know not how to provide themſelves elſewhere, rack

and skrew them beyond the worth of the thing. All theſe and many the like are but ſeveral ways of acting this one ſin of Oppreſſion, which becomes yet the more hainous, by how much the more helpleſs the perſon is that is thus oppreſſed, therefore the oppreſſion of the widow and fatherleſs, is in Scripture mentioned as the height of this ſin.

Gods vengeance againſt it.

10. It is indeed a moſt crying guilt, and that againſt which God hath threatned his heavy vengeance, as we read in divers Texts of Scripture; thus it is, *Ezek.* 18. 12. *He that hath oppreſſed the poor*, and hath ſpoiled by violence, he ſhall ſurely die, *his bloud ſhall be upon him*; and the ſame ſentence is repeated againſt him, *verſe* 18. Indeed God hath ſo peculiarly taken upon him the protection of the poor and oppreſſed, that he is engaged as it were in honour to be their avenger; and accordingly *Pſalm* 12. we ſee God ſolemnly declare his reſolution of appearing for them, verſe 5. *For the oppreſſion of the poor, for the ſighing of the needy, now will I ariſe, ſaith the Lord, I will ſet him in ſafety from him.* The advice therefore of *Solomon* is excellent, *Prov.* 22. 22. *Rob not the poor, becauſe he is poor; neither oppreſs the afflicted in the gate, for the Lord will plead their cauſe, and will ſpoil the ſoul of thoſe that ſpoiled them*; they are like in the end to have little joy of the booty it brings them in, when it thus engages God againſt them.

Theft.

11. The ſecond ſort of this injuſtice is Theft, and of that alſo there are two kinds, the one the with-holding what we ſhould pay, and the other taking from our Neighbour what is already in his poſſeſſion.

Not paying what we borrow.

12. Of the firſt ſort is the not paying of debts, whether ſuch as we have borrowed, or ſuch as by our own voluntary promiſe are become our debts, for they are equally due to him that can lay either of theſe claims to them; and therefore the with-holding of either of them is a Theft, a keeping from my Neighbour that which is his; yet the former of them is rather the more injurious, for by that I take from him that which he once actually had (be it Money or whatever elſe) and ſo make him worſe than I found him. This is a very great, and very common injuſtice. Men can now-adays with as great confidence deny him that asks a debt, as they do him that asks an alms; nay, many times 'tis made matter of quarrel for a Man to demand his own: Beſides the many attendances the Creditor is put to in purſuit of it, are a yet farther injury to him, by waſting his time, and taking him off from other buſineſs, and ſo he is made a loſer that way too. This is ſo great injuſtice, that I ſee not how a man can look upon any thing he poſſeſſes as his own right, whilſt he thus denies another his. It is the duty of every Man in debt, rather to ſtrip himſelf of all, and caſt himſelf again naked upon God's providence, than thus to feather his neſt with the ſpoils of his Neighbours. And ſurely it would prove the more thriving courſe, not only in reſpect of the bleſſing which may be expected upon juſtice, compared with the curſe that attends the contrary, but even in worldly prudence alſo; for he that defers paying of debts, will at laſt be forc't to it by Law, and that upon much worſe terms than he might have done it voluntarily, with a greater charge, and with ſuch a loſs of his credit, that afterward in his greateſt neceſſities he will not know where to borrow. But the ſure way for a Man to ſecure himſelf from the guilt of this injuſtice, is never to borrow more than he knows he hath means to repay, unleſs it be of one, who knowing his diſability, is willing to run the hazard. Otherwiſe he commits this ſin at the very time of borrowing; for he takes that from his Neighbour upon promiſe of paying, which he knows he is never likely to reſtore to him, which is a flat robbery.

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The ſame juſtice which ties Men to pay their own debts, ties alſo every ſurety to pay thoſe debts of others for which he ſtands bound, in caſe the principal either cannot or will not: For by being bound, he hath made it his own debt, and muſt in all juſtice anſwer it to the Creditor, who, it's preſumed, was drawn to lend on confidence of his ſecurity, and therefore is directly cheated and betrayed by him, if he ſee him not ſatisfied. If it be thought hard, that a Man ſhould pay for that which he never received benefit by; I ſhall yield it, ſo far as to be juſt matter of warineſs to every Man how he enter into ſuch engagements, but it can never be made an excuſe for the breaking them. *What we are bound for.*

As for the other ſort of debt, that which is brought upon a Man by his own voluntary promiſe, that alſo cannot without great injuſtice be with-holden: For it is now the Man's right, and then 'tis no matter, by what means it came to be ſo. Therefore we ſee *David* makes it part of the deſcription of a juſt Man, *Pſalm* 15. 4. that he keeps his promiſes, yea, *though they were made to his own diſadvantage*: And ſurely, he is utterly unfit to aſcend to that holy Hill, there ſpoken of, either as that ſignifies the Church here, or Heaven hereafter, that does not punctually obſerve this part of juſtice. To this ſort of debt may be reduced the wages of the ſervant, the hire of the labourer; and the with-holding of theſe is a great ſin, and the complaints of thoſe that are thus injured, aſcend up to God. *Behold* (ſaith S. *James*) *the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them that have reaped, are entred into the ear of the Lord of Sabbaoth*: *Deut.* 24. 14, 15. we find a ſtrict command in this matter, *Thou ſhalt not oppreſs a hired ſervant that is poor and needy, at his day thou ſhalt give him his hire, neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it, leſt he cry againſt thee to the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee.* This is one of thoſe loud clamorous ſins which will not ceaſe crying, till it bring down God's vengeance; and therefore though thou haſt no juſtice to thy poor brother, yet have at leaſt ſo much mercy to thy ſelf, as not to pull down judgments on thee by thus wronging him. *What we have promiſed.*

SUNDAY XII.

Of Theft; Stealing; of deceit in Truſt, in Traffick; of Reſtitution, &c.

Sect. 1. THE ſecond part of Theft, is the taking from our Neighbour that which is already in his poſſeſſion: And this may be done either more violently, and openly, or elſe more cloſely and ſlily; the firſt is the manner of thoſe that rob on the way, or plunder houſes, where by force they take the goods of their Neighbour; the other is the way of the pilfering Thief, that takes away a Man's goods unknown to him; I ſhall not diſpute which of theſe is the worſt; 'tis enough that they are both ſuch acts of injuſtice, as make Men odious to God, unfit for humane ſociety, and betray the actors to the greateſt miſchiefs even in this World, death it ſelf being by Law appointed the reward of it; and there are few that follow this trade long, but at laſt meet with that fruit of it. I am ſure 'tis madneſs for any to believe he ſhall always ſteal ſecurely, for he is to contend with the induſtry *Stealing the goods of our neighbour.*

of all thoſe whom he ſhall thus injure, whoſe loſſes will quicken their wits for the finding him out, and which is infinitely more, he is to ſtruggle with the juſtice of God, which doth uſually purſue ſuch Men to deſtruction, even in this world; witneſs the many ſtrange diſcoveries that have been made of the craftieſt Thieves. But however, if he were ſecure from the vengeance here, I am ſure nothing but repentance and reformation can ſecure him from the vengeance of it hereafter. And now when theſe dangers are weighed, 'twill ſure appear, that the Thief makes a pitiful bargain, he ſteals his Neighbours Money, or Cattle, and in exchange for it he muſt pay his life, or his Soul, perhaps both; and if *the whole World be too mean a price for a Soul*, as he tells us, *Mark* 8. 36. who beſt knew the value of them, having himſelf bought them, what a ſtrange madneſs is it, to barter them away for every petty trifle, as many do, who have got ſuch a habit of ſtealing, that not the meaneſt worthleſs thing can eſcape their fingers? Under this head of Theft may be ranked the receivers of ſtoln goods, whether thoſe that take them, as partners in the Theft, or thoſe that buy them, when they know or believe they are ſtoln. This many (that pretend much to abhor Theft) are guilty of, when they can by it, buy the thing a little cheaper than the common rate. And here alſo comes in the concealing of any goods a Man finds of his Neighbours, which whoſoever reſtores not, if he know, or can learn out the owner, is no better than a Thief; for he withholds from his Neighbour that which properly belongs to him: And ſure 'twill not be uncharitable to ſay, that he that will do this, would likewiſe commit the groſſer Theft, were he by that no more in danger of Law than in this he is.

Deceit. The third part of injuſtice is Deceit, and in that there may be as many acts as there are occaſions of entercourſe and dealing between man and man.

2. It were impoſſible to name them all, but I think they will be contained under theſe two general deceits, in matters of Truſt, and in matters of Traffick, or bargaining: Unleſs it be that of Gaming, which therefore here by the way, I muſt tell you, is as much a fraud and deceit as any of the reſt.

In Truſt. 3. He that deceives a Man in any Truſt that is committed to him, is guilty of a great injuſtice, and that the moſt treacherous ſort of one, it is the joyning of two great ſins in one, defrauding and promiſe-breaking; for in all truſts there is a promiſe implied, if not expreſt; for the very accepting of the truſt contains under it a promiſe of fidelity; theſe truſts are broken ſometimes to the living, ſometimes to the dead; to the living there are many ways of doing it, according to the ſeveral kinds of the truſt; ſometimes a truſt is more general, like that of *Potiphar* to *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 39. 4. a Man commits to another all that he hath, and thus Guardians of Children, and ſometimes Stewards are intruſted; ſometimes again it is more limited, and reſtrained to ſome one ſpecial thing; a Man intruſts another to bargain or deal for him in ſuch a particular, or he puts ſome one thing into his hands, to manage and diſpoſe: Thus among ſervants it is uſual for one to be intruſted with one part of the Maſters goods, and another with another part of them. Now in all theſe, and the like caſes, whoſoever acts not for him that intruſts him, with the ſame faithfulneſs that he would for himſelf, but ſhall either careleſly loſe, or prodigally embezle the things committed to him, or elſe convert them to his own uſe, he is guilty of this great ſin of betraying a truſt to the living. In like manner, he that being intruſted with the execution of a dead man's Teſtament, acts not according to the known intention of the dead Man,

but

but enriches himſelf by what is aſſigned to others, he is guilty of this ſin; in reſpect of the dead, which is ſo much the greater, by how much the dead hath no means of remedy and redreſs, as the living may have. It is a kind of robbing of Graves, which is a theft of which Men naturally have ſuch a horror, that he muſt be a very hardned thief, that can attempt it. But either of theſe frauds are made yet more hainous, when either God, or the poor are immediately concern'd in it, that is, when any thing is committed to a Man, for the uſes either of piety, or charity; this adds ſacriledge to both the fraud and the treachery, and ſo gives him title to all thoſe curſes that attend thoſe ſeveral ſins, which are ſo heavy, that he that for the preſent gain will adventure on them, makes as ill, nay, a much worſe bargain than *Gehazi*, 2 Kings 5. 27. who *by getting the raiment of* Naaman *got his leproſie too.*

4. The ſecond ſort of fraud is in matters of traffick and bargain, where- *In Traffick.* in there may be deceit both in the ſeller and buyer; that of the ſeller is commonly either in concealing the faults of the commodity, or elſe in over-rating it.

5. The ways of concealing its faults are ordinarily theſe, either firſt by *The ſellers concealing the faults of his Ware.* denying that it hath any ſuch fault, nay, perhaps commending it for the direct contrary quality, and this is down-right lying, and ſo adds that ſin to the other, and if that lye be confirmed by an oath, as it is too uſually, then the yet greater guilt of perjury comes in alſo; and then, what a heap of ſins is here gathered together? Abundantly enough to ſink a poor ſoul to deſtruction, and all this only to skrew a little more Money out of his Neighbours pocket, and that ſometimes ſo very little, that 'tis a miracle that any man that thinks he has a Soul, can ſet it at ſo miſerable a contemptible price. A ſecond means of concealing is by uſing ſome Art to the thing, to make it look fair, and to hide the faults of it, and this is acting a lye, though it be not ſpeaking one, which amounts to the ſame thing, and has ſurely in this caſe as much of the intention of cheating and defrauding, as the moſt impudent forſwearing can have. A third means, is the picking out ignorant Chapmen; This is, I believe, an Art too well known among Tradeſmen, who will not bring out their faulty wares to men of skill, but keep them to put off to ſuch, whoſe unskilfulneſs may make them paſſable with them: and this is ſtill the ſame deceit with the former; for it all tends to the ſame end, the couſening and defrauding of the Chapman, and then it is not much odds, whether I make uſe of my own Art, or his weakneſs for the purpoſe. This is certain, he that will do juſtly, muſt let his Chapman know what he buys; and if his own skill enable him not to judge, (nay, if he do not actually find out the fault) thou art bound to tell it him, otherwiſe thou makeſt him pay for ſomewhat which is not there, he preſuming there is that good quality in it, which thou knoweſt is not, and therefore thou mayeſt as honeſtly take his Money for ſome goods of another Mans, which thou knoweſt thou canſt never put into his poſſeſſion, which I ſuppoſe no Man will deny to be an arrant cheat. To this head of concealment may be referred that deceit of falſe weights and meaſures, for that is the concealing from the buyer a defect in the quantity, as the other was in the quality of the commodity, and is again the making him pay for what he hath not. This ſort of fraud is pointed at particularly by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 11. 1. with this note upon it, that *it is an abomination to the Lord.*

6. The ſecond part of fraud in the ſeller, lies in over-rating the com- *His over-rating it.* modity; though he have not diſguiſed or concealed the faults of it, and

ſo

ſo have dealt fairly in that reſpect, yet if he ſet an unreaſonable price upon it, he defrauds the buyer. I call that an unreaſonable price, which exceeds the true worth of the thing, conſidered with thoſe moderate gains, which all Tradeſmen are preſumed to be allowed in the Sale: Whatever is beyond this muſt in all likelihood be fetcht in by ſome of theſe ways: as firſt, by taking advantage of the buyers ignorance in the value of the thing, which is the ſame with doing it in the goodneſs, which hath already been ſhewed to be a deceit; or ſecondly, by taking advantage of his neceſſity: Thou findeſt a Man hath preſent and urgent need of ſuch a thing, and therefore takeſt this opportunity to ſet the Dice upon him: but this is that very ſin of Extortion, and Oppreſſion ſpoken of before, for it is ſure, nothing can juſtly raiſe the price of any thing, but either its becoming dearer to thee; or its being ſome way better in it ſelf; but the neceſſity of thy brother cauſes neither of theſe; his nakedneſs doth not make the clothes thou ſelleſt him ſtand thee in ever the more, neither doth it make them any way better; and therefore to rate them ever the higher is to change the way of trading, and ſell even the wants and neceſſities of thy neighbour, which ſure is a very unlawful vocation. Or thirdly, it may be by taking advantage of the indiſcretion of the Chapman. A man perhaps earneſtly fancies ſuch a thing, and then ſuffers that fancy ſo to overrule his reaſon, that he reſolves to have it upon any terms. If thou findeſt this in him, and thereupon raiſeſt thy rate, this is to make him buy his folly, which is of all others the deareſt purchaſe; 'tis ſure his fancy adds nothing to the real value, no more than his neceſſity did in the former caſe, and therefore ſhould not add to the price. He therefore that will deal juſtly in the buſineſs of ſelling, muſt not catch at all advantages, which the temper of his Chapman may give, but conſider ſoberly, what the thing is worth, and what he would afford it for to another, of whom he had no ſuch advantage, and accordingly rate it to him at no higher a price.

Fraud in the Buyer.

7. On the buyers part there are not ordinarily ſo many opportunities of Fraud; yet it is poſſible a Man may ſometimes happen to ſell ſomewhat, the worth whereof he is not acquainted with, and then it will be as unjuſt for the buyer to make gain by his ignorance, as in the other caſe it was for the ſeller: but that which often falls out, is the caſe of neceſſity, which may as probably fall on the ſellers ſide, as the buyers: A mans wants compel him to ſell, and permit him not to ſtay to make the beſt bargain, but force him to take the firſt offer, and here for the buyer to grate upon him, becauſe he ſees him in that ſtrait, is the ſame fault which I before ſhewed it to be in the ſeller.

Many temptations to deceit in Traffick.

8. In this whole buſineſs of Traffick there are ſo many opportunities of deceit, that a Man had need fence himſelf with a very firm reſolution, nay, love of juſtice, or he will be in danger to fall under temptation; for as the Wiſe man ſpeaks, *Ecclus.* 27. 2. *As a Nail ſticks faſt between the joynings of the Stones*; ſo doth ſin ſtick cloſe between buying and ſelling, it is ſo interwoven with all Trades, ſo mixt with the very firſt principles and grounds of them, that it is taught together with them, and ſo becomes part of the Art; ſo that he is now-a-days ſcarce thought fit to manage a Trade, that wants it, while he that hath moſt of this black Art of defrauding, applauds and hugs himſelf, nay, perhaps boaſts to others, how he hath over-reacht his neighbour.

The commonneſs of injuſtice a reproach to Chriſtianity.

What an intolerable ſhame is this, that we Chriſtians, who are by the precepts of our maſter ſet to thoſe higher duties of Charity ſhould inſtead

of

of practiſing them, quite unlearn thoſe common rules of juſtice, which meer Nature teaches? For, I think, I may ſay, there are none of thoſe ſeveral branches of injuſtice towards the poſſeſſions of our Neighbour, which would not be adjudged to be ſo by any ſober Heathen; ſo that, as S. *Paul* tells thoſe of the Circumciſion, that the Name of God *was blaſphemed among the Gentiles*, by that unagreeableneſs that was betwixt their practice, and their Law, *Rom.* 2. 24. So now may it be ſaid of us, that the *Name of Chriſt is blaſphemed among the Turks and Heathens*, by the vile and ſcandalous lives of us, who call our ſelves Chriſtians, and particularly in this ſin of injuſtice; for ſhame let us at laſt endeavour to wipe off this reproach from our profeſſion, by leaving theſe practices; to which methinks this one ſingle conſideration ſhould be enough to perſwade us.

It is not the way to enrich a man.

9. Yet beſides this, there want not other; among which, one there is of ſuch a nature, as may prevail with the arranteſt worldling, and that is, that this courſe doth not really tend to the enriching of him; there is a ſecret curſe goes along with it, which like a Canker eats out all the benefit was expected from it. This no Man can doubt that believes the Scripture, where there are multitudes of Texts to this purpoſe: Thus *Prov.* 22. 16. *He that oppreſſeth the poor to encreaſe his riches, ſhall ſurely come to want.* So Habbak. 2. 6. *Wo to him that encreaſeth that which is not his! how long? And he that ladeth himſelf with thick Clay, ſhall they not riſe up ſuddenly that ſhall bite thee, and awake that ſhall vex thee? And thou ſhalt be for booties to them.* This is commonly the fortune of thoſe that ſpoil and deceive others, they at laſt meet with ſome that do the like to them. But the place in *Zachary* is moſt full to this purpoſe, *Chap.* 5. where under the ſign of a flying roll is ſignified the curſe that goes forth againſt this ſin, Verſe 4. *I will bring it forth ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the Thief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by my Name, and it ſhall conſume it with the timber thereof, and with the ſtones thereof.* Where you ſee, Theft and Perjury are the two ſins, againſt which this curſe is aimed (and they too often go together in the matter of defrauding) and the nature of this curſe is, to conſume the houſe, to make an utter deſtruction of all that belongs to him that is guilty of either of theſe ſins. Thus whilſt thou art ravening after thy Neighbours goods, or houſe, thou art but gathering fuel to burn thine own. And the effect of theſe threatnings of God we daily ſee in the ſtrange improſperouſneſs of ill gotten Eſtates, which every man is apt enough to obſerve in other mens caſes; he that ſees his Neighbour decline in his Eſtate, can preſently call to mind, This was gotten by oppreſſion or deceit; yet ſo ſottiſh are we, ſo bewitcht with the love of gain, that he that makes this obſervation, can ſeldom turn it to his own uſe, is never the leſs greedy, or unjuſt himſelf for that vengeance he diſcerns upon others.

It ruines the Soul eternally.

10. But alas! if thou couldeſt be ſure that thy unjuſt poſſeſſions ſhould not be torn from thee, yet when thou remembreſt, how dear thou muſt pay for them in another world, thou haſt little reaſon to brag of thy prize. Thou thinkeſt thou haſt been very cunning when thou haſt over-reacht thy brother; But God knows, all the while there is another over-reaching thee, and cheating thee of what is infinitely more precious, even thy Soul: The Devil herein deals with thee as Fiſhers uſe to do; thoſe that will catch a great Fiſh, will bait the hook with a leſs, and ſo the great one coming with greedineſs to devour that, is himſelf taken: So thou that art gaping to ſwallow up thy poor brother, art thy ſelf made a prey to that great devourer. And alas! what will it eaſe thee in Hell that thou haſt left wealth behind

behind thee upon Earth, when thou ſhalt there want that, which the meaneſt beggar here enjoys, even a drop of water to cool thy tongue? Conſider this, and from henceforth reſolve to employ all that pains and diligence thou haſt uſed to deceive others, in reſcuing thy ſelf from the frauds of the grand deceiver.

The neceſſity of Reſtitution. 11. To this purpoſe it is abſolutely neceſſary, that thou make reſtitution to all whom thou haſt wronged: For as long as thou keepeſt any thing of the unjuſt gain, 'tis as it were an earneſt-penny from the Devil, which gives him full right to thy Soul. But perhaps it may be ſaid, it will not in all caſes be poſſible to make reſtitution to the wronged party, peradventure he may be dead; in that caſe then make it to his Heirs, to whom his right deſcends. But it may farther be objected, That he that hath long gone on in a courſe of fraud, may have injured many, that he cannot now remember, and many, that he hath no means of finding out: In this caſe all I can adviſe is this: Firſt, to be as diligent as is poſſible, both in recalling to mind who they were, and endeavouring to find them out; and when, after all thy care, that proves impoſſible, let thy Reſtitutions be made to the poor, and that they may not be made by halfs, be as careful as thou canſt to reckon every the leaſt mite of unjuſt gain: But when that cannot exactly be done, as 'tis ſure it cannot by thoſe who have multiplied the Acts of fraud, yet even there let them make ſome general meaſures, whereby to proportion their reſtitution: As for example, a Tradeſman that cannot remember how much he hath cheated in every ſingle parcel, yet may poſſibly gueſs in the groſs whether he have uſually over-reacht to the value of a third, or a fourth part of the wares, and then what proportion ſoever he thinks he has ſo defrauded, the ſame proportion let him now give out of that eſtate he hath raiſed by his Trade: But herein it concerns every man to deal uprightly, as in the preſence of God, and not to make advantage of his own forgetfulneſs, to the cutting ſhort of the Reſtitution, but rather go on the other hand, and be ſure rather to give too much, than too little. If he do happen to give ſomewhat over, he need not grudge the charge of ſuch a ſin-offering, and 'tis ſure he will not, if he do heartily deſire an atonement. Many other difficulties there may be in this buſineſs of reſtitution, which will not be foreſeen, and ſo cannot now be particularly ſpoke to; but the more of thoſe there are, the greater horrour ought men to have of running into the ſin of injuſtice, which it will be ſo difficult, if not impoſſible for them to repair, and the more careful ought they to be to mortifie that which is the root of all injuſtice, to wit, Covetouſneſs.

SUNDAY XIII.

Of Falſe Reports, Falſe witneſs, Slanders, Whiſperings; Of Scoffing for infirmities, Calamities, Sins, &c. Of Poſitive Juſtice, Truth. Of Lying. Of Envy and Detraction. Of Gratitude, &c.

His credit. *Sect.* 1. THE Fourth Branch of Negative Juſtice concerns the Credit of our Neighbours, which we are not to leſſen, or impair by any means, particularly not by falſe Reports. Of falſe reports there may be two ſorts, the one is when a man ſays ſomething of his Neighbour, which he directly knows to be falſe, the other when poſſibly he has ſome ſlight ſurmiſe, or jealouſie of the thing, but that upon ſuch weak grounds, that 'tis as likely to be falſe as true. In either

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of theſe caſes, there is a great guilt lies upon the reporter. That there doth ſo in the firſt of them, no body will doubt, every one acknowledging that it is the greateſt baſeneſs to invent a lie of another; but there is as little reaſon to queſtion the other, for he that reports a thing as a truth, which is but uncertain, is a liar alſo, or if he do not report it as a certainty, but only as a probability, yet then though he be not guilty of the lie, yet he is of the injuſtice of robbing his neighbour of his credit; for there is ſuch an aptneſs in men to believe ill of others, that any the lighteſt jealouſie will, if once it be ſpread abroad, ſerve for that purpoſe; and ſure it is a moſt horrible injuſtice upon every ſlight ſurmiſe and fancy to hazard the bringing ſo great an evil upon another; eſpecially when it is conſidered, that thoſe ſurmiſes commonly ſpring rather from ſome cenſorioufneſs, peeviſhneſs, or malice in the ſurmiſer, than from any real fault in the perſon ſo ſuſpected.

2. The manner of ſpreading theſe falſe reports of both kinds, is not al- *Falſe witneſs.* ways the ſame; ſometimes it is more open and avowed, ſometimes more cloſe and private: the open is many times by falſe witneſs before the Courts of Juſtice: and this not only hurts a man in his credit, but in other reſpects alſo: 'tis the delivering him up to the puniſhment of the Law, and according to the nature of the crime pretended, does him more or leſs miſchief; but if it be of the higheſt kind, it may concern his life, as we ſee it did in *Naboth*'s caſe, 1 *Kings* 21. How great and crying a ſin it is in this reſpect, as alſo in that of the perjury, you may learn from what hath been ſaid of both thoſe ſins. I am now to conſider it only, as it touches the credit; and to that it is a moſt grievous wound, thus to have a crime publickly witneſſed againſt one, and ſuch as is ſcarce cureable by any thing that can afterwards be done to clear him, and therefore whoever is guilty of this, doth a moſt outragious injuſtice to his neighbour; this is that which is expreſly forbidden in the ninth Commandment, and was by God appointed to be puniſht by the inflicting of the very ſame ſuffering upon him, which his falſe teſtimony aimed to bring upon the other, *Deuteronomy* 19. 16.

3. The ſecond open way of ſpreading theſe reports, is by a publick and *Publick ſlanders.* common declaring of them; though not before the Magiſtrate, as in the other caſe, yet in all companies, and before ſuch as are likely to carry it farther, and this is uſually done with bitter railings and reproaches, it being an ordinary Art of ſlanderers, to revile thoſe whom they ſlander, that ſo by the ſharpneſs of the accuſation, they may have the greater impreſſion on the minds of the hearers: this both in reſpect of the ſlander, and the railing is a high injury, and both of them ſuch, as debar the committers from Heaven; thus *Pſal.* 15. where the upright man is deſcribed, that ſhall have his part there, this is one ſpecial thing, verſe 3. *That he ſlandereth not his neighbour.* And for railing, the Apoſtle in ſeveral places reckons it amongſt thoſe works of the fleſh, which are to ſhut men out both from the Church here by excommunication, as you may ſee, 1 *Cor.* 15. 11. and from the Kingdom of God hereafter, as it is 1 *Cor.* 6. 10.

4. The other more cloſe and private way of ſpreading ſuch reports is *Whiſpering* that of the Whiſperer, he that goes about from one to another, and privately vents his ſlanders, not out of an intent by that means to make them leſs publick, but rather more: this trick of delivering them by way of ſecret, being the way to make them both more believed, and more ſpoken of too; for he that receives ſuch a tale, as a ſecret from one, thinks to pleaſe ſome body elſe, by delivering it as a ſecret to him alſo; and ſo it paſſes from

one hand to another, till at last it spread over a whole Town. This sort of slanderer is of all others the most dangerous, for he works in the dark, ties all he speaks to, not to own him as the author; so that whereas in the more publick accusations, the party may have some means of clearing himself and detecting his accuser, here he shall have no possibility of that, the slander, like a secret poison, works incurable effects, before ever the man discern it. This sin of whispering is by S. *Paul* mentioned among those great crimes, which are the effects of a reprobate mind, *Rom.* 1. 29. It is indeed one of the most incurable wounds of this sword of the tongue: the very bane and pest of humane society: and that which not only robs single persons of their good names, but oftentimes whole families, nay, publick Societies of men of their peace; what ruines, what confusions hath this one sin wrought in the world? 'tis *Solomon*'s observation, *Prov.* 18. 28. that a *Whisperer separateth chief friends*, and sure one may truly say of tongues thus employed, that they are *set on fire of Hell*, as S. *James* saith, Chap. 3. 6.

Several steps towards this sin.

5. This is such a guilt that we are to beware of all the degrees of approach to it, of which there are several steps; the first is the giving ear to, and cherishing of those that come with slanders, for they that entertain and receive them, encourage them in the practice; for as our common Proverb says, If there were no Receivers, there would be no Thief; so if there were none that would give an ear to tales, there would be no Tale-bearers. A second step is, the giving too easie credit to them, for this helps them to attain part of their end. They desire to get a general ill opinion of such a man, but the way of doing it must be by causing it, first, in particular men: and if thou suffer them to do it in thee, they have so far prospered in their aim. And for thy own part thou doest a great injustice to thy neighbour, to believe ill of him without a just ground, which the accusation of such a person certainly is not. A third step is the reporting to others, what is thus told thee; by which thou makest thy self directly a party in the slander, and after thou hast unjustly withdrawn from thy neighbour thy own good opinion, endeavourest to rob him also of that of others. This is very little below the guilt of the first whisperer, and tends as much to the ruine of our neighbours credit. And these several degrees have so close a dependance one upon another, that it will be very hard for him that allows himself the first, to escape the other, and indeed he that can take delight to hear his neighbour defamed, may well be presumed of so malicious a humor, that 'tis not likely he should stick at spreading the slander. He therefore that will preserve his innocence in this matter, must never in the least degree cherish or countenance any that brings these false reports. And it is not less necessary to his peace, than to his innocency; for he that once entertains them, must never expect quiet, but shall be continually incited, and stirred up even against his neerest and deerest relations; so that this whisperer, and slanderer is to be lookt on by all, as a common enemy, he being so as well to those to whom, as of whom he speaks.

Despising and scoffing.

6. But besides this grosser way of slandering, there is another, whereby we may impair and lessen the credit of our neighbour, and that is by contempt and despising, one common effect whereof is scoffing and deriding him: This is very injurious to a mans reputation. For the generality of men do rather take up opinions upon trust, than judgment; and therefore if they see a man despised and scorned, they will be apt to do the like. But besides this effect of it, there is a present injustice in the very act

act of deſpiſing and ſcorning others. There are ordinarily but three things which are made the occaſions of it, (unleſs it be with ſuch, with whom vertue and godlineſs are made the moſt reproachful things, and ſuch deſpiſing is not only an injury to our neighbour, but even to God himſelf, for whoſe ſake it is, that he is ſo deſpiſed) thoſe three are, firſt, the infirmities, ſecondly, the calamities, thirdly, the ſins of a man, and each of theſe are very far from being ground of our triumphing over him.

For infirmities.

7. Firſt, for infirmities, be they either of body or mind, the deformity and unhandſomneſs of the one, or the weakneſs and folly of the other, they are things out of his power to help, they are not his faults, but the wiſe diſpenſations of the great Creator, who beſtows the excellencies of body and mind, as he pleaſes; and therefore to ſcorn a man, becauſe he hath them not, is in effect to reproach God who gave them not to him.

For calamities.

8. So alſo for the calamities and miſeries that befal a man, be it want or ſickneſs, or whatever elſe, theſe alſo come by the providence of God, who raiſeth up and pulleth down, as ſeems good to him, and it belongs not to us to judge, what are the motives to him to do ſo, as many do, who upon any affliction that befals another, are preſently concluding, that ſure it is ſome extraordinary guilt, which pulls this upon him, though they have no particular to lay to his charge. This raſh judgment our Saviour reproves in the *Jews*, *Luke* 13. where on occaſion of the extraordinary ſufferings of the *Galilæans*, he asks them, verſe 2, 3. *Suppoſe ye that theſe Galilæans were ſinners above all the Galilæans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* When we ſee Gods hand heavy upon others, it is no part of our buſineſs to judge them, but our ſelves, and by repentance to prevent, what our own ſins have deſerved. But to reproach and revile any that are in affliction, is that barbarous cruelty, taken notice of by the *Pſalmiſt*, as the height of wickedneſs, *Pſalm 69. 26. They perſecute him whom thou haſt ſmitten, and they talk to the grief of them whom thou haſt wounded*: In all the miſeries of others, compaſſion becomes a debt to them; how unjuſt are they then, that inſtead of paying them that debt, afflict them with ſcorn and reproach?

For ſins.

9. Nay, the very ſins of men, though, as they have more of their wills in them, they may ſeem more to deſerve reproach, yet certainly they alſo oblige us to the former duty of compaſſion, and that in the higheſt degree, as being the things, which of all others make a man the moſt miſerable. In all theſe caſes, if we conſider how ſubject we are to the like our ſelves, and that it is only Gods mercy to us, by which we are preſerved from the worſt that any man elſe is under, it will ſurely better become us to look up to him with thankfulneſs, than down on them with contempt and deſpiſing. Thus you ſee the direct injuſtice of ſcorning and contemning our brethren, to which when that other is added, which naturally follows, as a conſequent of this, to wit, the begetting the like contempt in others, there can ſure be no doubt of its being a great and horrible injuſtice to our neighbour in reſpect of his credit.

Deſtroying the credit a great injury.

10 Now how great the injury of deſtroying a mans credit is, may be meaſured by theſe two things; firſt, the value of the thing he is robb'd of, and ſecondly, the difficulty of making reparations. For the firſt, 'tis commonly known, that a man's good name is a thing he holds moſt precious, oftentimes dearer than his life, as we ſee by the hazards men ſometimes run to preſerve even a miſtaken reputation; but 'tis ſure, it is that, which hath even by ſober men been eſteemed one of the greateſt happineſſes of life: And to ſome ſort of men, ſuch eſpecially as ſubſiſt by deal-

ings in the world, 'tis so necessary, that it may well be reckoned as the means of their livelyhood, and then sure, 'tis no slight matter to rob a man of what is thus valuable to him.

and irreparable. 11. Secondly, the difficulty of making reparations encreaseth the injury; and that is such in this case of defamation, that I may rather call it an impossibility, than a difficulty. For when men are possest of an ill opinion of a person, 'tis no easie matter to work it out: so that the slanderer is herein like a young Conjurer, that raises a Devil he knows not how to lay again. Nay, suppose men were generally as willing to lay down ill conceits of their neighbours, as they are to take them up, yet how is it possible for him that makes even the most publick recantation of his slander, to be sure that every man that hath come to the hearing of the one, shall do so of the other also? And if there be but one person that doth not, (as probably there will be many) then is the reparation still short of the injury.

Yet every guilty person must do all he can to repair the injury. 12. This consideration is very fit to make men afraid of doing this wrong to their neighbour; but let it not be made use of to excuse those that have already done the wrong, from endeavouring to make the best reparations they can; for though 'tis odds, it will not equal the injury, yet let them however do what they are able towards it. And this is so necessary towards the obtaining pardon of the sin, that none must expect the one that do not perform the other. Whosoever therefore sets himself to repent of his faults of this kind, must by all prudent means endeavour to restore his neighbour to that degree of credit he hath deprived him of; and if that be not to be done without bringing the shame upon himself of confessing publickly the slander, he must rather submit to that, than be wanting to this necessary part of justice, which he owes to the wronged party

Justice in the thoughts. 13. Thus I have gone through these four branches of Negative Justice to our Neighbour; wherein we must yet further observe, that this Justice binds us, not only in respect of our words and actions, but of our very thoughts and affections also; we are not only forbid to hurt, but to hate; not only restrained from bringing any of these evils forementioned upon him, but we must not so much as wish them before, nor delight in them after they are befallen him: we must take no pleasure either in the sin of his Soul, or hurt of his Body: we must not envy him any good thing he enjoys, nor so much as wish to possess our selves of it; neither will it suffice us, that we so bridle our tongue, that we neither slander, nor revile, if we have that malice in our hearts, which makes us wish his discredit; or rejoyce, when we find it procured, though we have no hand in the procuring it. This is the peculiar property of Gods Laws, that they reach to the heart, whereas mens can extend only to the words and actions; and the reason is clear, because he is the only Law-giver, that can see what is in the heart; therefore if there were the perfectest innocency in our tongue and hands, yet if there be not this purity of heart, it will never serve to acquit us before him. The counsel therefore of *Solomon* is excellent, *Prov.* 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* Let us strictly guard that, so that no malicious unjust thought enter there; and that not only as it may be the means of betraying us to the grosser act, but also as it is in it self such a pollution in Gods sight, as will unfit us for the blessed vision of God, whom none but the pure in heart have promise of seeing, *Matth.* 5. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*

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14. I come now to ſpeak of the poſitive part of Juſtice, which is the yielding to every man that which by any kind of right he may challenge from us. Of theſe dues there are ſome that are general to all mankind, others that are reſtrained within ſome certain conditions and qualities of men, and become due only by vertue of thoſe qualifications. *Poſitive Juſtice.*

15. Of the firſt ſort, that is, thoſe that are due to all men, we may reckon firſt the ſpeaking Truth, which is a common debt we owe to all mankind; ſpeech is given us as the inſtrument of intercourſe and ſociety one with another, the means of diſcovering the mind which otherwiſe lies hid and concealed, ſo that were it not for this, our converſations would be but the ſame as of Beaſts: Now this being intended for the good and advantage of mankind, 'tis a due to it, that it be uſed to that purpoſe; but he that Lies, is ſo far from paying that debt, that on the contrary he makes his ſpeech the means of injuring and deceiving him he ſpeaks to. *Speaking Truth a due to all men.*

16. There might much be ſaid to ſhew the ſeveral ſorts of Obligations we lye under to ſpeak truth to all men; but ſuppoſing I write to Chriſtians, I need not inſiſt upon any other, than the Commands we have of it in Scripture: Thus *Eph.* 4. 25. the Apoſtle commands that *putting away lying, they ſpeak every man truth with his Neighbour:* And again, *Col.* 3. 9. *Lye not one to another:* And *Prov.* 6. 17. a lying tongue is mentioned as one of thoſe things that are abominations to the Lord. Yea, ſo much doth he hate a lye, that it is not the moſt pious and religious end that can reconcile him to it; the man that lies, though in a zeal to Gods glory, ſhall yet be judged as a ſinner, *Rom.* 3. 7. What ſhall then become of thoſe multitudes of men that lie on quite other ends? Some out of malice, to miſchief others; ſome out of covetouſneſs to defraud their Neighbours; ſome out of pride, to ſet themſelves out; and ſome out of fear, to avoid danger, or hide a fault. But of a yet ſtranger ſort than all theſe are thoſe, that do it without any diſcernible temptation, that will tell lyes by way of ſtory, take pleaſure in telling incredible things, from which themſelves reap nothing but the reputation of impertinent lyars. *Lying expreſly forbidden in Scripture.*

17. Among theſe divers kinds of falſhood, Truth is become ſuch a rarity among us, that it is a moſt difficult matter, to find ſuch a Man as *David* deſcribes, *Pſalm* 15. 2. *That ſpeaketh the truth from his heart.* Men have ſo glibbed their tongues to lying, that they do it familiarly upon any or no occaſion, never thinking that they are obſerved either by God or Man. But they are extremely deceived in both; for there is ſcarce any ſin (that is at all endeavoured to be hid) which is more diſcernible even to Men: They that have a cuſtom of lying, ſeldom fail (be their memory never ſo good) at ſome time or other to betray themſelves; and when they do, there is no ſort of ſin meets with greater ſcorn and reproach; a Lyar being by all accounted a title of the greateſt infamy and ſhame. But as for God, 'tis madneſs to hope that all their Arts can diſguiſe them from him, who needs none of thoſe caſual ways of diſcovery which Men do, but ſees the heart, and ſo knows at the very inſtant of ſpeaking, the falſhood of what is ſaid: And then by his Title of the God of Truth, is tied not only to hate, but puniſh it: And accordingly you ſee, *Rev.* 22. that the lyars are in the number of thoſe that are ſhut out of the new *Jeruſalem*; and not only ſo, but alſo have their *part in the lake that burneth with Fire and Brimſtone.* If therefore thou be not of the humour of that unjuſt Judge, Chriſt ſpeaks of, *Luke* 18. 2. *who neither feared God, nor regarded man,* thou muſt reſolve on this part of Juſtice, the putting away lying, which is abhorred by both. *The great commonneſs and folly of this ſin.*

Courteous behaviour a due to all men.

18. A ſecond thing we owe to all is Humanity and Courteſie of behaviour, contrary to that ſullen churliſhneſs we find ſpoken of in *Nabal*, who was of ſuch a temper, *that a man could not ſpeak to him*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 17. There is ſure ſo much of reſpect due to the very nature of Mankind, that no accidental advantage of wealth or honour, which one Man hath above another, can acquit him from that debt to it, even in the perſon of the meaneſt; and therefore that crabbed and harſh behaviour to any that bears but the form of a Man, is an injuſtice to that nature he partakes of. And when we conſider how much that nature is dignified by the Son of God his taking it upon him, the obligation to reverence it is yet greater, and conſequently the ſin of thus contemning it.

Not payed by the proud man.

19. This is the common guilt of all proud and haughty perſons, who are ſo buſie in admiring themſelves, that they over-look all that is valuable in others, and ſo think they owe not ſo much as common civility to other Men, whilſt they ſet up themſelves, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did his Image, *to be worſhipped of all.* This is ſure very contrary to what the Apoſtle exhorts, *Rom.* 12. 10. *In honour prefer one another*; And again, *Phil.* 2. 4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others*; and let ſuch remember the ſentence of our bleſſed Saviour, *Luke* 14. 11. *He that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted*, which we often find made good to us, in the ſtrange down-falls of proud Men. And it is no wonder, for this ſin makes both God and men our enemies; God, as the Scripture every where teſtifies, abhors it, and all that are guilty of it, and Men are by means of it uſed ſo contemptuouſly and unkindly by us, that they are by nothing more provoked againſt us; and then whom God and man thus reſiſt, who ſhall ſecure and uphold?

Meekneſs a due to all men.

20. A third thing we owe to all is meekneſs; that is, ſuch a patience and gentleneſs towards all, as may bridle that mad paſſion of anger, which is not only very uneaſie to our ſelves, as hath already been ſhewed, but alſo very miſchievous to our Neighbours, as the many outrages, that are oft committed in it, do abundantly teſtifie. That this duty of meekneſs is to be extended to all men, there is no doubt; for the Apoſtle in expreſs words commands it, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 14. *Be patient towards all men*, and that it ſhould ſeem, in ſpite of all provocation to the contrary, for the very next words are, *See that none render evil for evil, or railing for railing*; and *Timothy* is commanded to exerciſe this meekneſs even towards them who oppoſe themſelves againſt the Doctrine of the Goſpel, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. which was a caſe, wherein ſome heat would probably have been allowed, if it might have been in any.

Brawling very inſufferable.

21. This vertue of meekneſs is ſo neceſſary to the preſerving the peace of the World, that it is no wonder, that Chriſt, who came to plant peace among Men, ſhould enjoyn meekneſs to all. I am ſure the contrary effects of rage and anger are every where diſcernable; it breeds diſquiet in Kingdoms, in Neighbourhoods, in Families, and even between the neareſt relations; 'tis ſuch a humour, that *Solomon* warns us never to enter a friendſhip with a Man that is of it, *Prov.* 22. 24. *Make no friendſhip with an angry man, and with a furious man thou ſhalt not go.* It makes a Man unfit to be either friend or companion, and indeed makes one inſufferable to all that have to do with him, as we are again taught by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 21. 19. Where he prefers the *dwelling in a Wilderneſs, rather than with a contentious and angry woman*; and yet a Woman has ordinarily only that one weapon of the tongue to offend with. Indeed to any that have not the ſame unquietneſs of humour, there can ſcarce be a greater uneaſineſs, than to converſe

verſe with thoſe that have it, though it never proceed farther than words. How great this ſin is, we may judge by what our Saviour ſays of it, *Matth.* 5. where there are ſeveral degrees of puniſhment allotted to ſeveral degrees of it, but alas! we daily out-go that which he there ſets as the higheſt ſtep of this ſin; the calling, *Thou fool*, is a modeſt ſort of reviling, compared with thoſe multitudes of bitter reproaches we uſe in our rages.

It leads to that great ſin of curſing.

22. Nay, we often go yet higher; reproaches ſerve not our turn, but we muſt curſe too. How common is it to hear Men uſe the horridſt execrations and curſings upon every the ſlighteſt cauſe of diſpleaſure? Nay, perhaps without any cauſe at all; ſo utterly have we forgot the rule of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 14. *Bleſs and curſe not*; Yea, the precept of our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, *Matth.* 5. 44. *Pray for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe you.* Chriſt bids us pray for thoſe who do us all injury, and we are often curſing thoſe who do us none. This is a kind of ſaying our prayers backward indeed, which is ſaid to be part of the Ceremony the Devil uſes at the making of a Witch, and we have in this caſe alſo reaſon to look on it, as a means of bringing us into acquaintance and league with that accurſed ſpirit here, and to a perpetual abiding with him hereafter. 'Tis the language of Hell, which can never fit us to be Citizens of the New *Jeruſalem*, but marks us out for inhabitants of that land of darkneſs. I conclude this with the advice of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 31. *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking be put away from you, with all malice.*

Particular dues.

23. Having ſpoken thus far of thoſe common dues, wherein all Men are concerned and have a right, I am now to proceed to thoſe other ſorts of dues, which belong to particular perſons, by vertue of ſome ſpecial qualification. Theſe qualifications may be of three kinds, that of Excellency, that of Want, and that of Relation.

A reſpect due to men of extraordinary gifts.

24. By that of Excellency, I mean any extraordinary gifts, or endowments of a perſon; ſuch as wiſdom, learning, and the like, but eſpecially grace. Theſe being the ſingular gifts of God, have a great value and reſpect due to them, whereſoever they are to be found; and this we muſt readily pay by a willing and glad acknowledgment of thoſe his gifts in any he has beſtowed them on, and bearing them a reverence and reſpect, anſwerable thereunto, and not out of an over-weening of our own excellencies, deſpiſe and undervalue thoſe of others, as they do who will yield nothing to be reaſon, but what themſelves ſpeak, nor any thing piety, but what agrees with their own practice.

We are not to envy them.

25. Alſo we muſt not envy or grudge that they have thoſe gifts, for that is not only an injuſtice to them, but injurious alſo to God who gave them, as it is at large ſet forth in the parable of the labourers, *Matth.* 20. where he asks them who grumbled at the Maſters bounty to others, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil becauſe mine is good?* This envying at God's goodneſs to others, is in effect a murmuring againſt God, who thus diſpoſes it; neither can there be a greater, and more direct oppoſition againſt him, than for me to hate and wiſh ill to a Man, for no other reaſon, but becauſe God has loved and done well to him. And then in reſpect of the Man, 'tis the moſt unreaſonable thing in the World, to love him the leſs, meerly becauſe he has thoſe good qualities, for which I ought to love him more.

Nor detract from them.

26. Neither muſt we detract from the excellencies of others, we muſt not ſeek to eclipſe or darken them by denying either the kinds or degrees of them, by that means to take off that eſteem which is due to them. This ſin of detraction is generally the effect of the former, of envy; he that en-

vies

vies a Man's worth, will be apt to do all he can to leſſen it in the opinions of others, and to that purpoſe will either ſpeak ſlightly of his excellencies, or if they be ſo apparent, that he knows not how to cloud them, he will try if he can by reporting ſome either real, or feigned infirmity of his, take off from the value of the other, and ſo by caſting in ſome dead flies, as the Wiſe man ſpeaks, *Eccleſ.* 10. 1. ſtrive to *corrupt the ſavour of the ointment.* This is a great injuſtice, and directly contrary to that duty we owe, of acknowledging and reverencing the gifts of God in our brethren.

The folly of both thoſe ſins.

27. And both thoſe ſins of envy and detraction do uſually prove as great follies, as wickedneſs; the envy conſtantly brings pain and torment to a Mans ſelf, whereas if he could but chearfully and gladly look on thoſe good things of anothers, he could never fail to be the better for them himſelf; the very pleaſure of ſeeing them would be ſome advantage to him: But beſides that thoſe gifts of his brother may be many ways helpful to him; his wiſdom and learning may give him inſtruction, his piety and vertue, example, *&c.* But all this the envious Man loſeth, and hath nothing in exchange for it, but a continual fretting, and gnawing of heart.

28. And then for detraction, that can hardly be ſo managed, but it will be found out; he that is ſtill putting in Caveats againſt Mens good thoughts of others, will quickly diſcover himſelf to do it out of envy, and then that will be ſure to leſſen their eſteem of himſelf, but not of thoſe he envies, it being a ſort of bearing teſtimony to thoſe excellencies, that he thinks them worth the envying.

A reſpect due to men in regard of their ranks and qualities.

29. What hath been ſaid of the value and reſpect due to thoſe excellencies of the mind, may in a lower degree be applied to the outward advantages of honour, greatneſs, and the like. Theſe, though they are not of equal value with the former (and ſuch for which no Man is to prize himſelf) yet in regard that theſe degrees and diſtinctions of Men are by God's wiſe providence diſpoſed for the better ordering of the World, there is ſuch a civil reſpect due to thoſe, to whom God hath diſpens'd them, as may beſt preſerve that order, for which they were intended. Therefore all inferiours are to behave themſelves to their Superiours with modeſty and reſpect, and not by a rude boldneſs confound that order which it hath pleaſed God to ſet in the world, but according as our Church-Catechiſm teaches, *Order themſelves lowly and reverently to all their betters.* And here the former caution againſt envy comes in moſt ſeaſonably; theſe outward advantages being things, of which generally Men have more taſte, than of the other, and therefore will be more apt to envy and repine to ſee others exceed them therein; to this therefore all the former conſiderations againſt envy will be very proper, and the more neceſſary to be made uſe of, by how much the temptation is in this caſe to moſt minds the greater.

Dues to thoſe that are in any ſort of want.

30. The ſecond qualification is that of want; whoever is in diſtreſs for any thing, wherewith I can ſupply him, that diſtreſs of his makes it a duty in me ſo to ſupply him, and this in all kinds of wants. Now the ground of its being a duty is, that God hath given Men abilities not only for their own uſe, but for the advantage and benefit of others, and therefore what is thus given for their uſe, becomes a debt to them, whenever their need requires it. Thus he that is ignorant and wants knowledge, is to be inſtructed by him that hath it, and this is one ſpecial end why that knowledge is given him; *The tongue of the learned is given to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon, Eſay* 50. 4. He that is in ſadneſs and affliction, is to be comforted by him that is himſelf in chearfulneſs. This we ſee S. *Paul* makes the end of God's comforting him, that he *might be able to comfort them that are in any trouble,*

trouble, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. He that is in any courſe of ſin, and wants reprehenſion and counſel, muſt have that want ſupplied to him by thoſe who have ſuch abilities and opportunities, as may make it likely to do good. That this is a juſtice we owe to our Neighbour, appears plainly by that Text, *Levit.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou ſhalt in any wiſe reprove him, and not ſuffer ſin upon him*; where we are under the ſame obligation to reprove him, that we are not to hate him. He that lies under any ſlander, or unjuſt defamation, is to be defended and cleared by him that knows his innocence, or elſe he makes himſelf guilty of the ſlander, becauſe he neglects to do that which may remove it; and how great an injuſtice that of ſlandering our Neighbour is, I have already ſhewed.

To the poor.

31. Laſtly, He that is in poverty and need, muſt be relieved by him that is in plenty; and he is bound to it, not only in charity, but even in juſtice. *Solomon* calls it a due, *Prov.* 3. 27. *With-hold not good from him to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it:* And what that good is, he explains in the very next Verſe: *Say not to thy neighbour, Go and come again, and to morrow I will give, when thou haſt it by thee.* It ſeems 'tis the withholding a due, ſo much as to defer giving to our poor Neighbour. And we find God did among the *Jews* ſeparate a certain portion of every Mans increaſe to the uſe of the poor, a tenth every third year (which is all one with a thirtieth part every Year,) *Deut.* 14. 28, 29. And this was to be paid, not as a charity, or liberality, but as a debt, they were unjuſt, if they withheld it. And ſurely we have no reaſon to think, that Chriſtian juſtice is ſunk ſo much below the Jewiſh, that either nothing at all, or a leſs proportion is now required of us. I wiſh our practice were but at all anſwerable to our obligation in this point, and then ſurely we ſhould not ſee ſo many *Lazarus*'s lie unrelieved at our Doors, they having a better right to our ſuperfluities, than we our ſelves have; and then what is it but arrant robbery to beſtow that upon our vanities, nay our ſins, which ſhould be their portion?

God withdraws thoſe abilities which are not thus imployed.

32. In all the foregoing caſes he that hath ability is to look upon himſelf, as God's ſteward, who hath put it into his hands to diſtribute to them that want; and therefore not to do it, is the ſame injuſtice and fraud, that it would be in any Steward to purſe up that Money for his private benefit, which was intruſted to him, for the maintenance of the Family; and he that ſhall do thus, hath juſt reaſon to expect the doom of the unjuſt Steward, *Luke* 16. *to be put out of his ſtewardſhip*, to have thoſe abilities taken from him, which he hath ſo unfaithfully employed. And as for all the reſt, ſo particularly for that of wealth, 'tis very commonly to be obſerved, that it is withdrawn from thoſe that thus defraud the poor of their parts; the griping Miſer coming often by ſtrange undiſcernible ways to poverty; and no wonder, he having no title to God's bleſſing on his heap, who does not conſecrate a part to him in his poor Members. And therefore we ſee the *Iſraelites* before they could make that challenge of Gods promiſe to bleſs them, *Deut.* 26. 15. *Look down from thy holy habitation, and bleſs thy people Iſrael*, &c. they were firſt to pay the poor Man's tithes, *verſe* 12. without which they could lay no claim to it. This withholding *more than is meet*, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* 11. 24. *tends to poverty*; and therefore as thou wouldſt play the good husband for thy ſelf, be careful to perform this juſtice according to thy ability to all that are in want.

Duties in reſpect of relation.

33. The third qualification is that of Relation, and of that there may be divers ſorts, ariſing from divers grounds, and duties anſwerable to each of them. There is firſt a Relation of a Debtor to a Creditor; and he

that ſtands in that relation to any, whether by vertue of bargain, loan or promiſe, 'tis his duty to pay juſtly what he owes, if he be able (as on the other ſide, if he be not, 'tis the Creditors, to deal charitably and Chriſtianly with him, and not to exact of him beyond his ability.) But I need not inſiſt on this, having already, by ſhewing you the ſin of withholding debts, informed you of this duty.

Gratitude to Benefactors.

34. There is alſo a relation of an obliged perſon to his Benefactor, that is, one that hath done him good, of what kind ſoever, whether ſpiritual or corporal; and the duty of that perſon is, firſt thankfulneſs, that is, a ready and hearty acknowledgment of the courteſie received: Secondly, prayer for Gods bleſſings, and rewards upon him; and thirdly, an endeavour, as opportunity and ability ſerves, to make returns of kindneſs, by doing good turns back again. This duty of gratitude to Benefactors is ſo generally acknowledged by all, even the moſt barbarous and ſavageſt of men, that he muſt have put off much of his humane nature, that refuſes to perform it. The very *Publicans* and ſinners, as our Saviour ſays, *Do good to thoſe that do good to them.*

The contrary too common.

35. Yet how many of us fail even in this? How frequent is it to ſee Men, not only neglect to repay courteſies, but return injuries inſtead of them? It is too obſervable in many particulars, but in none more, than in the caſe of advice, and admonition, which is of all others, the moſt precious part of kindneſs, the realleſt good turn that can be done from one Man to another. And therefore thoſe that do this to us, ſhould be look'd on, as our prime and greateſt benefactors. But alas! how few are there that can find gratitude, ſhall I ſay? nay, patience for ſuch a courteſie? Go about to admoniſh a Man of a fault, or tell him of an Error, he preſently looks on you, as his enemy: You are, as S. *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, Chap. 4. 16. *Become his enemy, becauſe you tell him the truth*; ſuch a pride there is in Mens hearts, that they muſt not be told of any thing amiſs, though it be with no other intent, but that they may amend it. A ſtrange madneſs this is, the ſame that it would be in a ſick man, to fly in the face of him that comes to cure him, on a fancy that he diſparaged him in ſuppoſing him ſick; ſo that we may well ſay with the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 12. 1. *He that hateth reproof is brutiſh.* There cannot be in the World a more unhappy temper, for it fortifies a Man in his ſins; raiſes ſuch Mounts and Bulwarks about them, that no Man can come to aſſault them, and if we may believe *Solomon*, deſtruction will not fail to attend it, *Prov.* 29. 1. *He that being often reproved hardneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.* But then again in reſpect of the admoniſher, 'tis the greateſt injuſtice, I may ſay, cruelty that can be: He comes in tenderneſs and compaſſion to reſcue thee from danger; and to that purpoſe puts himſelf upon a very uneaſie task; for ſuch the general impatience Men have to admonition, hath now made it; and what a defeat, what a grief is it to him to find, that inſtead of reforming the firſt fault, thou art run into a ſecond, to wit, that of cauſleſs diſpleaſure againſt him? This is one of the worſt, and yet I doubt, the commoneſt ſort of unthankfulneſs to benefactors, and ſo a great failing in that duty we owe to that ſort of Relation. But perhaps theſe will be lookt on as remote Relations, (yet 'tis ſure they are ſuch as challenge all that duty I have aſſigned to them) I ſhall in the next place proceed to thoſe Relations, which are by all acknowledged to be of the greateſt nearneſs.

SUNDAY XIV.

Of duty to Magiſtrates, Paſtors. Of the duty of Parents to Children, &c. *Of Childrens duty unto Parents,* &c.

Sect. 1. THE firſt of thoſe nearer ſorts of Relations, is that of a Parent; and here it will be neceſſary to conſider the ſeveral ſorts of Parents, according to which the duty of them is to be meaſured. Thoſe are theſe three, the Civil, the Spiritual, the Natural. *Duty to Parents.*

2. The Civil Parent is he whom God hath eſtabliſht the Supreme Magiſtrate, who by a juſt right poſſeſſes the Throne in a Nation. This is the common Father of all thoſe that are under his authority. The duty we owe to this Parent, is firſt Honour and Reverence, looking on him, as upon one, on whom God hath ſtamped much of his own power and authority, and therefore paying him all honour and eſteem, never daring upon any pretence whatſoever, to *ſpeak evil of the Ruler of our people*, Acts 23.5. *Duties to the Supreme Magiſtrate.* *Honour.*

3. Secondly, Paying Tribute; This is expreſly commanded by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 13. 6. *Pay ye tribute alſo, for they are Gods Miniſters attending continually upon this very thing.* God has ſet them apart as Miniſters for the common good of the people, and therefore 'tis all juſtice, they ſhould be maintained and ſupported by them. And indeed when it is conſidered, what are the cares and troubles of that high calling, how many thorns are platted in every Crown, we have very little reaſon to envy them theſe dues; and it may truly be ſaid, there is none of their poor labouring ſubjects that earns their living ſo hardly. *Tribute.*

4. Thirdly, We are to pray for them: This is alſo expreſly commanded by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. to be done for *Kings, and for all that are in authority.* The buſineſſes of that calling are ſo weighty, the dangers and hazards of it ſo great, that they of all others need prayers for Gods direction, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing, and the prayers that are thus poured out for them, will return into our own boſoms, for the bleſſings they receive from God tend to the good of the people, to their *living a quiet and peaceable life*, as it is in the cloſe of the verſe forementioned. *Prayers for them.*

5. Fourthly, We are to pay them Obedience. This is likewiſe ſtrictly charged by the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lords ſake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors as thoſe that are ſent by him.* We owe ſuch an obedience to the ſupreme power, that whoever is authorized by him, we are to ſubmit to; and S. *Paul* likewiſe is moſt full to this purpoſe, *Rom.* 13. 1. *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers:* And again, ver. 2. *Whoſoever reſiſteth the powers, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God.* And 'tis obſervable that theſe precepts were given at a time, when thoſe powers were Heathens, and cruel perſecutors of Chriſtianity; to ſhew us, that no pretence of the wickedneſs of our Rulers can free us of this duty. An obedience we muſt pay either Active or Paſſive: The active in the caſe of all lawful commands; that is, when ever the Magiſtrate commands ſomething, which is not contrary to ſome command of God, we are then bound to act according to that command of the Magiſtrate, to do the things he requires. But when he enjoyns any thing contrary to what God hath commanded, we are not then to pay him this active obedience; we may, nay we muſt refuſe thus to act, (yet here we muſt be very well aſſured that the thing is ſo contrary, and not pretend conſcience for a cloak of ſtubbornneſs) we are in that caſe to *obey God rather than man.* But *Obedience.*

even this is a ſeaſon for the Paſſive obedience, we muſt patiently ſuffer, what he inflicts on us for ſuch refuſal, and not, to ſecure our ſelves, riſe up againſt him. *For who can ſtretch his hand againſt the Lords anointed, and be guiltleſs?* ſays *David* to *Abiſhai*, 1 *Sam.* 26. 9. and that at a time when *David* was under a great perſecution from *Saul*, nay, had alſo the aſſurance of the Kingdom after him; and S. *Paul*'s ſentence in this caſe is moſt heavy, *Rom.* 13. 2. *They that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* Here is very ſmall encouragement to any to riſe up againſt the lawful Magiſtrate, for though they ſhould ſo far proſper here, as to ſecure themſelves from him by this means, yet there is a King of Kings from whom no power can ſhelter them, and this damnation in the cloſe will prove a ſad prize of their Victories. What is on the other ſide the duty of the Magiſtrate to the people will be vain to mention here, none of that rank being like to read this Treatiſe, and it being very uſeleſs for the people to inquire, what is the duty of their Supreme, wherein the moſt are already much better read, than in their own; it may ſuffice them to know, that whatſoever his duty is, or however performed, he is accountable to none but God, and no failing of his part can warrant them to fail of theirs.

Duties to our Paſtors. 6. The ſecond ſort of Parents are the ſpiritual; that is, the Miniſters of the Word, whether ſuch, as be Governours in the Church, or others under them, who are to perform the ſame offices to our Souls, that our natural parents do to our Bodies. Thus S. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that in *Chriſt Jeſus he had begotten them through the Goſpel*, 1 Cor. 4. 15. and the *Galatians*, Chap. 4. 19. that he *travails in birth of them, till Chriſt be formed in them*: And again, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. *He had fed them with Milk*; that is, ſuch Doctrines as were agreeable to that infant ſtate of Chriſtianity they were then in; but he had *ſtronger meat for them of full age*, *Heb.* 5. 14. All theſe are the offices of a Parent, and therefore they that perform them to us, may well be accounted as ſuch.

Love. 7. Our duty to theſe is firſt to love them, to bear them that kindneſs, which belongs to thoſe who do us the greateſt benefits. This is required by S. *Paul*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 13. *I beſeech you brethren, mark them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake.* The work is ſuch as ought in all reaſon to procure them love, it being of the higheſt advantage to us.

Eſteem. 8. Secondly, 'tis our duty to value and eſteem them, as we ſee in the text now mentioned; and ſurely this is moſt reaſonable, if we conſider either the nature of their work, or who it is that employs them. The nature of their work is of all others the moſt excellent. We uſe to value other profeſſions proportionably to the dignity and worth of the things they deal in. Now ſurely there is no Merchandize of equal worth with a Soul, and this is their Traffick, reſcuing precious Souls from perdition; and if we conſider further, who it is that employs them, it yet adds to the reverence due to them. They are *Ambaſſadors for Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. and Ambaſſadors are by the Laws of all Nations to be uſed with a reſpect anſwerable to the quality of thoſe that ſend them. Therefore Chriſt tells his Diſciples, when he ſends them out to preach, *He that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth me, and he that deſpiſeth me deſpiſeth him that ſent me*, *Luke* 10. 16. It ſeems there is more depends on the deſpiſing of Miniſters, than men ordinarily conſider, 'tis the deſpiſing of God and Chriſt both. Let thoſe think of this, who make it their paſtime and ſport to affront and deride this calling. And let thoſe alſo, who dare preſume to exerciſe the Offices of it, without being lawfully called to it, which is a moſt high preſumption; 'tis as if a man

man of his own head ſhould go, as an Ambaſſador from his Prince. The Apoſtle ſays of the Prieſts of the Law, which yet are inferior to thoſe of the Goſpel, *That no man taketh this honour to himſelf, but he which was called of God,Heb.*5.4. How ſhall then any man dare to aſſume this greater honour to himſelf, that is not called to it? Neither will it ſuffice to ſay, they have the inward call of the ſpirit; for ſince God hath eſtabliſhed an order in the Church, for the admitting men to this Office, they that ſhall take it upon them without that authority, reſiſt that ordinance, and are but of the number of thoſe thieves and robbers, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *John* 10. *Which come not in by the door.* Beſides, the ſad experience of theſe times ſhews, that many who pretend moſt to this inward call of the Spirit, are called by ſome other Spirit than that of God, the doctrines they vent, being uſually directly contrary to that Word of his, on which all true Doctrines muſt be founded. Such are to be lookt on as thoſe Seducers, thoſe falſe Prophets, whereof we are ſo often warn'd in the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles. And whoſoever countenances them, or follows them, partakes with them in their guilt. It is recorded of *Jeroboam*, as a crying ſin, that he made of the meaneſt of the people Prieſts; that is, ſuch as had by Gods inſtitution no right to it: And whoever hearkens to theſe uncalled Preachers, runs into that very ſin; for without the encouragement of being followed, they would not long continue in the courſe, and therefore they that give them that encouragement, have much to anſwer for, and are certainly guilty of the ſin of deſpiſing their true Paſtors, when they ſhall thus ſet up theſe falſe Apoſtles againſt them. This is a guilt this age is too much concerned in, God in his mercy ſo timely convince us of it, as may put a ſtop to that confuſion and impiety, which breaks in ſo faſt upon us by it.

9. Thirdly, We owe to them maintenance: But of this I have ſpoken already in the firſt part of this Book, and ſhall not here repeat. Fourthly, We owe them obedience. *Obey them*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your Souls, Heb.* 13. 17. This obedience is to be paid them in ſpiritual things; that is, whatſoever they out of Gods word ſhall declare to us to be Gods Commands, theſe we are diligently to obey, remembring that it is not they but God requires it, according to that of Chriſt, *He that heareth you heareth me, Luke* 10. 6. And this, whether it be delivered by the way of publick preaching, or private exhortation, for in both, ſo long as they keep them to the rule, which is Gods word, they are the *Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts, Mal.* 2. 7. This obedience the Apoſtle inforceth from a double motive, one taken from their Miniſtery, another from themſelves. *They watch*, ſays he, *for your Souls, as they that muſt give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief.* The people are by their obedience to enable their Paſtors to give a comfortable account of their Souls; and it is a moſt unkind return of all their care and labours, to be put to grieve for the ill ſucceſs of them. But then in the ſecond place, 'tis their own concernment alſo; they may put their Miniſters to the diſcomfort of ſeeing all their pains caſt away, but themſelves are like to get little by it, that (ſays the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 17.) *will be unprofitable for you*; 'tis your ſelves that will finally prove the loſers by it, you loſe all thoſe glorious rewards, which are offered, as the crown of this obedience; you get nothing but an addition to your ſin and puniſhment; for as our Saviour tells the *Phariſees, if he had not come and ſpoken to them, they had not had ſin, John* 15. 24. that is, in compariſon with what they then had; ſo certainly they that never had the Goſpel preached to them, are much more innocent than they that have heard and reſiſted

Maintenance.

Obedience.

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it. And for the punishment, what Christ told those to whom he had preached, *That it should be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon*, which were heathen Cities, *than for them*, the same undoubtedly we may conclude for our selves.

Prayers for them. 10. Lastly, we are to pray for them; This S. *Paul* every where requires of his spiritual children; thus *Eph.* 6. 7, 8. having commanded prayer for all Saints, he adds, *And for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel*; and so again, *Col.* 4. 3. And this remains still a duty to these Spiritual Fathers, to pray for such assistances of Gods spirit to them, as may enable them rightly to discharge that Holy Calling. I shall omit to set down here, what is the duty of Ministers to the people, upon the same consideration, on which I forbare to mention the duty of Magistrates.

Duties to our natural Parents. 11. The third sort of Parents is the natural, the *fathers of our flesh*, as the Apostle calls them, *Heb.* 12. 9. And to these we owe several duties; as first, we owe them reverence and respect; we must behave our selves towards them with all humility and observance, and must not upon any pretence of infirmity in them despise or contemn them, either in outward behaviour, or so much as inwardly in our hearts. If indeed they have infirmities, it must be our business to cover and conceal them; like *Shem* and *Japhet*, who, while cursed *Cham* publisht and *discloſed the nakedness of their Father, covered it*, *Gen.* 9. 23. and that in such a manner too, as even themselves might not behold it. We are as much as may be to keep our selves from looking on those nakednesses of our Parents, which may tempt us to think irreverently of them. This is very contrary to the practice of too many children, who do not only publish and deride the infirmities of their Parents, but pretend they have those infirmities they have not; there is ordinarily such a pride and headiness in youth that they cannot abide to submit to the counsels and directions of their Elders, and therefore to shake them off, are willing to have them pass for the effects of dotage, when they are indeed the fruits of sobriety and experience. To such the exhortation of *Solomon* is very necessary, *Prov.* 24. 22. *Hearken to thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.* A multitude of texts more there are in that book to this purpose, which shews that the wisest of men thought it necessary for children to attend to the counsel of their Parents. But the youth of our age set up for wisdom the quite contrary way, and think they then become wits, when they are advanced to the despising the counsel, yea, mocking the persons of their Parents. Let such, if they will not practise the exhortations, yet remember the threatning of the Wise man, *Prov.* 30. 17. *The eye that mocketh his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the vally shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it.*

Reverence.

Love. 12. A second duty we owe to them is Love; we are to bear them a real kindness, such as may make us heartily desirous of all manner of good to them, and abhor to do any thing that may grieve and disquiet them. This will appear but common gratitude, when 'tis remembred what our parents have done for us, how they were not only the instruments of first bringing us into the world but also of sustaining and supporting us after; and certainly they that rightly weigh the cares and fears, that go to the bringing up of a child, will judge the love of that child to be but a moderate return for them. This love is to be expreſt several ways, first, in all kindness of behaviour, carrying our selves not only with an awe and respect, but with kindness and affection, and therefore most gladly and readily

readily doing thoſe things, which may bring joy and comfort to them, and carefully avoiding whatever may grieve and afflict them. Secondly, this love is to be expreſt in praying for them. The debt a child ows to a parent is ſo great, that he can never hope himſelf to diſcharge it, he is therefore to call in Gods aid, to beg of him, that he will reward all the good his parents have done for him, by multiplying his bleſſings upon them; what ſhall we then ſay to thoſe children, that inſtead of calling to Heaven for bleſſings on their parents, ranſack Hell for curſes on them, and pour out the blackeſt execrations againſt them? This is a thing ſo horrid, that one would think they needed no perſwaſion againſt it; becauſe none could be ſo vile as to fall into it; but we ſee God himſelf, who beſt knows mens hearts, ſaw it poſſible, and therefore laid the heavieſt puniſhment upon it. *He that curſeth Father or Mother, let him die the death, Exod.* 21. 17. And alas! our daily experience tells us, 'tis not only poſſible but common, even this of uttering curſes. But 'tis to be feared, there is another yet more common, that is, the wiſhing curſes, though fear or ſhame keep them from ſpeaking out. How many children are there, that either through impatience of the Government, or greedineſs of the poſſeſſions of the Parents, have wiſht their deaths? But whoever doth ſo, let him remember, that how ſliely and fairly ſoever he carry it before men, there is one that ſees thoſe ſecreteſt wiſhes of his heart, and in his ſight he aſſuredly paſſes for this hainous offender, a curſer of his Parents. And then let it be conſidered, that God hath as well the power of puniſhing, as of ſeeing, and therefore ſince he hath pronounced death to be the reward of that ſin, 'tis not unreaſonable to expect he may himſelf inflict it; that they who watch for the death of their Parents, may untimely meet with their own. The fifth Commandment promiſeth long life as the reward of honouring the Parent, to which 'tis very agreeable that untimely death be the puniſhment of the contrary, and ſure there is nothing more highly contrary to that duty, than this we are now ſpeaking of, the curſing our Parents.

14. The third duty we owe to them is Obedience; this is not only contained in the fifth Commandment, but expreſly injoyned in other places of Scripture, *Epheſ. 6. 1. Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right*; and again, *Col. 3. 20. Children obey your Parents in all things, for this is well pleaſing to the Lord.* We owe them an obedience in all things, unleſs where their commands are contrary to the commands of God, for in that caſe our duty to God muſt be preferred; and therefore if any parent ſhall be ſo wicked, as to require his child to ſteal, to lie, or to do any unlawful thing, the child then offends not againſt his duty, though he diſobey that command, nay, he muſt diſobey, or elſe he offends againſt a higher duty, even that he ows to God his Heavenly Father. Yet when 'tis thus neceſſary to refuſe obedience, he ſhould take care to do it in ſuch a modeſt, and reſpectful manner, that it may appear 'tis conſcience only, and not ſtubbornneſs moves him to it. But in caſe of all lawful commands; that is, when the thing commanded is either good, or not evil, when it hath nothing in it contrary to our duty to God, there the child is bound to obey, be the command in a weightier or lighter matter. How little this duty is regarded is too manifeſt every where in the world, where Parents generally have their children no longer under command, than they are under the rod; when they are once grown up, they think themſelves free from all obedience to them; or if ſome do continue to pay it, yet let the motive of it be examined, and 'twill in too many be found only Worldly prudence. *Obedience.*

prudence. They fear to displease their Parents, lest they should shorten their hand towards them, and so they shall lose somewhat by it; but how few are there that obey purely upon conscience of duty? This sin of Disobedience to Parents was by the Law of *Moses* punishable with death, as you may read *Deut.* 21. 18. but if Parents now-a-days should proceed so with their children, many might soon make themselves childless.

Especially in their Marriage.

15. But of all the acts of disobedience, that of marrying against the consent of the Parent is one of the highest. Children are so much the goods, the possessions of their Parent, that they cannot, without a kind of theft, give away themselves without the allowance of those that have the right in them; and therefore we see under the Law, the *Maid that had made any vow, was not suffered to perform it, without the consent of the Parent, Numb.* 30. 5. The right of the Parent was thought of force enough to cancel and make void the Obligation, even of a vow, and therefore surely it ought to be so much considered by us as to keep us from making any such, whereby that right is infringed.

Ministring to their wants.

16. A fourth duty to the Parent is to assist and minister to them in all their wants of what kind soever, whether weakness and sickness of body, decayedness of understanding, or poverty and lowness in estate; in all these the child is bound, according to his ability to relieve and assist them: for the two former, weakness of body, and infirmity of mind, none can doubt of the duty, when they remember how every child did in his infancy receive the very same benefit from the Parents; the child had then no strength to support, no understanding to guide it self; the care of the Parents was fain to supply both these to it, and therefore in common gratitude, whenever either of these becomes the Parents case, as sometimes by great age, or some accident both do, the child is to perform the same offices back again to them. As for that of Relieving their poverty, there is the very same Obligation to that with the former, it being but just to sustain thy Parent who has formerly sustained thee: but besides this, Christ himself teacheth us, that this is contained within the precept of honouring their Parents: for when *Mark* 7. 13, he accuses the *Pharisees of rejecting the Commandment of God, to cleave to their own traditions*, he instances in this particular concerning the relieving of Parents, whereby 'tis manifest that this is a part of that duty which is enjoyned in the fifth Commandment, as you may see at large in the Text, and such a duty it is, that no pretence can absolve, or acquit us of it. How then shall those answer it, that deny relief to their poor Parents, that cannot part with their own excesses and superfluities, which are indeed their sins, to satisfie the necessities of those to whom they owe their being? Nay, some there are yet worse, who out of pride scorn to own their Parents in their poverty: thus it often happens, when the Child is advanced to dignity or wealth, they think it a disparagement to them to look on their Parents that remain in a low condition, it being the betraying, as they think, to the world the meanness of their birth, and so the poor Parent fares the worse for the prosperity of his child. This is such a pride and unnaturalness together, as will surely find a sharp vengeance from God; for if *Solomon* observe of Pride alone, that it is the *forerunner of destruction, Prov.* 16. 18. we may much rather conclude so of it, when it is thus accompanied.

Duty to be paid even to the worst of Parents.

17. To this that hath been said of the duty of Children to their Parents, I shall add only this: that no unkindness, no fault of the Parent, can acquit the child of this duty; but as S. *Peter* tells servants, 1 *Pet.* 2. 18. that they *must be subject, not only to the good and gentle Masters, but also*

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to the froward; ſo certainly it belongs to children to perform duty, not only to the kind and vertuous, but even to the harſheſt, and wickedſt Parent. For though the gratitude due to a kind Parent, be a very forcible motive to make the child pay his duty, yet that is not the only nor chiefeſt ground of it; that is laid in the Command of God, who requires us thus to honour our Parents, and therefore though we ſhould ſuppoſe a Parent ſo unnatural, as never to have done any thing to oblige the child (which can hardly be imagined) yet ſtill the Command of God continues in force, and we are in conſcience of that, to perform that duty to our Parents, though none of the other tye of gratitude ſhould lye on us.

Duty of Parents to Children.

But as this is due from the child to the Parent, ſo on the other ſide there are other things alſo due from the Parents to the Child, and that throughout the ſeveral ſtates and Ages of it.

To nouriſh them.

18. Firſt, There is the care of nouriſhing and ſuſtaining it, which begins from the very birth, and continues a duty from the Parent, till the child be able to perform it to himſelf; this is a duty which nature teaches; even the ſavage beaſts have a great care and tenderneſs in nouriſhing their young, and therefore may ſerve to reproach and condemn all Parents, who ſhall be ſo unnatural as to neglect this. I ſhall not here enter into the queſtion, *Whether the Mother be obliged to give the child its firſt nouriſhment, by giving it Suck her ſelf*, becauſe 'twill not be poſſible to affirm univerſally in the Caſe, there being many circumſtances, which may alter it, and make it not only lawful, but beſt not to do it: all I ſhall ſay, is, that where no impediment of ſickneſs, weakneſs, or the like does happen, 'tis ſurely beſt for the Mother her ſelf to perform this office, there being many advantages to the Child by it, which a good Mother ought ſo far to conſider, as not to ſell them to her own ſloth, or niceneſs, or any ſuch unworthy motive; for where ſuch only are the grounds of forbearing it, they will never be able to juſtifie the omiſſion, they being themſelves unjuſtifiable.

Bring them to Baptiſm.

But beſides this firſt care, which belongs to the body of the child, there is another, which ſhould begin near as early, which belongs to their Souls, and that is the bringing them to the Sacrament of Baptiſm, thereby to procure them an early right to all thoſe precious advantages, which that Sacrament conveighs to them. This is a duty the Parents ought not to delay, it being moſt reaſonable, that they who have been inſtruments to conveigh the ſtain and pollution of ſin to the poor Infant, ſhould be very earneſt and induſtrious to have it waſht off, as ſoon as may be: Beſides, the life of ſo tender a creature is but a blaſt, and many times gone in a moment; and though we are not to deſpair of God's mercy to thoſe poor children, who dye without Baptiſm, yet ſurely thoſe Parents commit a great fault by whoſe neglect it is that they want it.

Educate the n.

19. Secondly, The Parents muſt provide for the education of the child; they muſt, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, *Prov.* 22. 6. *Train up the child in the way he ſhould go.* As ſoon therefore as children come to the uſe of reaſon, they are to be inſtructed, and that firſt in thoſe things which concern their eternal well-being, they are by little and little to be taught all thoſe things which God hath commanded them as their duty to perform; as alſo what glorious rewards he hath provided for them, if they do it, and what grievous and eternal puniſhment, if they do it not. Theſe things ought as early as is poſſible, to be inſtilled into the minds of children, which (like new veſſels) do uſually keep the ſavour of that which is firſt put into them; and therefore it nearly concerns all Parents to look they be at firſt thus ſeaſoned with Vertue and Religion. 'Tis ſure if this be neglected, there is one

ready at hand to fill them with the contrary: the Devil will be diligent enough to inſtil into them all wickedneſs and vice, even from their cradles; and there being alſo in all our natures ſo much the greater aptneſs to evil, than to good, there is need of great care and watchfulneſs to prevent thoſe endeavours of that enemy of Souls, which can no way be, but by poſſeſſing them at firſt with good things, breeding in them a love to vertue, and a hatred of vice; that ſo when the temptations come, they may be armed againſt them. This ſurely is above all things the duty of Parents to look after, and the neglect of it is a horrible cruelty; we juſtly look upon thoſe Parents, as moſt unnatural wretches, that take away the life of their child; but alas! that is mercy and tenderneſs, compared to this of neglecting his education, for by that he ruines his Soul, makes him miſerable eternally; and God knows multitudes of ſuch cruel Parents there are in the World, that thus give up their children to be poſſeſt by the Devil, for want of an early acquainting them with the ways of God; nay indeed, how few there are that do conſcionably perform this duty, is too apparent by the ſtrange rudeneſs and ignorance that is generally among youth; the children of thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, being frequently as ignorant of God and Chriſt as the meereſt Heathens. But whoever they are that thus neglect this great duty, let them know that it is not only a fearful miſery they bring upon their poor children, but alſo a horrible guilt upon themſelves. For as God ſays to the careleſs Watchman, *Ezek.* 3. 18. *That if any ſoul periſh* by his negligence, *that ſoul ſhall be required at his hands*; ſo ſurely will it fare with all Parents who have this office of watchmen intruſted to them by God over their own children. A ſecond part of education is the bringing them up to ſome employment, buſying them in ſome honeſt exerciſe, whereby they may avoid that great ſnare of the Devil, Idleneſs: and alſo be taught ſome uſeful Art or Trade, whereby when they come to age, they may become profitable to the Common-wealth, and able to get an honeſt living to themſelves.

Means towards the education of Children.

20. To this great duty of Educating of Children there is required as means, firſt, Encouragement; ſecondly, Correction. Encouragement is firſt to be tried, we ſhould endeavour to make children in love with duty, by offering them rewards and invitations, and whenever they do well, take notice of it, and encourage them to go on. It is an ill courſe ſome Parents hold, who think they muſt never appear to their children but with a face of ſowreneſs and auſterity; this ſeems to be that which S. *Paul* forewarns Parents of, when he bids *fathers* not to *provoke their children to wrath*, *Col.* 3. 21. To be as harſh and unkind to them, when they do well, as if they do ill, is the way to provoke them; and then the Apoſtle tells us in the ſame Verſe, what will be the iſſue of it, they will be diſcouraged, they will have no heart to go on in any good courſe, when the Parent affords them no countenance. The ſecond means is correction, and this becomes ſeaſonable, when the former will do no good, when all fair means, perſwaſions, and encouragements prevail not, then there is a neceſſity of uſing ſharper; and let that be firſt tried in words, I mean not by railing and foul language, but in ſober, yet ſharp reproof; but if that fail too, then proceed to blows; and in this caſe, as *Solomon* ſays, *He that ſpareth his rod hateth his Son*, *Prov.* 13. 24. 'tis a cruel fondneſs, that to ſpare a few ſtripes at preſent, will adventure him to thoſe ſad miſchiefs, which commonly befal the child that is left to himſelf. But then this correction muſt be given in ſuch a manner, as may be likely to do good; to which purpoſe it muſt firſt be given timely; the child muſt not be ſuffered to run

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on in any ill, till it hath got a habit, and a ſtubbornneſs too. This is a great error in many Parents, they will let their children alone for divers years, to do what they liſt, permit them to lie, to ſteal, without ever ſo much as rebuking them, nay, perhaps pleaſe themſelves to ſee the witty ſhifts of the child, and think it matters not what they do while they are little: but alas! all that while the vice gets root, and that many times ſo deep an one, that all they can do afterwards, whether by words or blows, can never pluck it up. Secondly, Correction muſt be moderate, not exceeding the quality of the fault, nor the tenderneſs of the child. Thirdly, it muſt not be given in rage, if it be, it will not only be in danger of being immoderate, but it will loſe its effects upon the child, who will think he is corrected, not becauſe he has done a fault, but becauſe his Parent is angry, and ſo will rather blame the Parent than himſelf; whereas on the contrary, care ſhould be taken to make the child as ſenſible of the fault, as of the ſmart; without which he will never be throughly amended.

The Parent to watch over their Souls even when they are grown up.

21. Thirdly, after children are grown up, and are paſt the age of education, there are yet other offices for the Parent to perform to them; the Parent is ſtill to watch over them in reſpect of their ſouls, to obſerve how they practiſe thoſe precepts which are given them in their education, and accordingly to exhort, incourage, or reprove, as they find occaſion.

To provide for their ſubſiſtence.

22. So alſo for their outward eſtate, they are to put them into ſome courſe of living in the World; if God have bleſt the Parent with wealth, according to what he hath, he muſt diſtribute to his children, remembring that ſince he was the inſtrument of bringing them into the world, he is, according to his ability, to provide for their comfortable living in it; they are therefore to be lookt on as very unnatural Parents, who, ſo they may have enough to ſpend in their own riots and exceſs, care not what becomes of their children, never think of providing for them. Another fault is uſual among Parents in this buſineſs; they defer all the proviſions for them, till themſelves be dead, heap up, perhaps, great matters for them againſt that time, but in the mean time afford them not ſuch a competency, as may enable them to live in the world. There are ſeveral miſchiefs come from this: Firſt, it leſſens the childs affection to his Parent, nay, ſometimes it proceeds ſo far, as to make him wiſh his death: which though it be ſuch a fault, as no temptation can excuſe in a child, yet 'tis alſo a great fault in a Parent, to give that temptation. Secondly, it puts the child upon ſhifts and tricks, many times diſhoneſt ones, to ſupply his neceſſities; this is, I doubt not, a common effect of it, the hardneſs of Parents has often put Men upon very unlawful courſes, which when they are once acquainted with, perhaps they never leave, though the firſt occaſion ceaſe; and therefore Parents ought to beware how they run them upon thoſe hazards. Beſides, the Parent loſes that contentment, which he might have in ſeeing his children live proſperouſly and comfortably, which none but an arrant Earth-worm would exchange for the vain imaginary pleaſure of having money in his cheſt. But in this buſineſs of providing for children there is yet another thing to be heeded, and that is, that the Parent get that wealth honeſtly, which he makes their portion; elſe 'tis very far from being a proviſion: there is ſuch a curſe goes along with an ill gotten eſtate, that he that leaves ſuch a one to his child, doth but cheat and deceive him, makes him believe he has left him wealth, but has withal put ſuch a canker in the bowels of it, that is ſure to eat it out.

This is ſo common an obſervation, that I need ſay nothing to confirm the truth of it; would God it were as generally laid to heart, as it ſeems to be generally taken notice of: Then ſurely Parents would not account it a reaſonable motive to unjuſt dealing, that they may thereby provide for their children, for this is not a way of providing for them; nay, 'tis the way to ſpoil them of whatever they have lawfully gathered for them; the leaſt mite of unlawful gain being of the nature of leaven, which ſowres the whole lump, bringing down curſes upon all a Man poſſeſſeth. Let all Parents therefore ſatisfie themſelves with ſuch proviſions for their children, as God ſhall enable them honeſtly to make, aſſuring themſelves how little ſoever it be, 'tis a better portion than the greateſt wealth unjuſtly gotten; according to that of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 16. 8. *Better is a little with righteouſneſs, than great revenues without right.*

To give them good example.

23. A fourth thing the Parent ows to the child is Good Example, he is not only to ſet him rules of vertue and godlineſs, but he muſt himſelf give him a pattern in his own practice; we ſee the force of example is infinitely beyond that of precept, eſpecially where the Perſon is one to whom we bear a reverence, or with whom we have a continual converſation; both which uſually meet in a Parent. It is therefore a moſt neceſſary care in all Parents to behave themſelves ſo before their Children, that their example may be a means of winning them to vertue. But alas! this age affords little of this care, nay, ſo far 'tis from it, that there are none more frequently the inſtruments of corrupting children, than their own Parents. And indeed how can it be otherwiſe! While men give themſelves liberty to all wickedneſs, 'tis not to be hoped, but that the children which obſerve it, will imitate it; the child that ſees his Father drunk, will ſurely think he may be ſo too, as well as his Father. So he that hears him ſwear, will do the like, and ſo for all other vices; and if any Parent that is thus wicked himſelf ſhould happen to have ſo much more care of his childs Soul than his own, as to forbid him the things which himſelf practiſes, or correct him for the doing them; 'tis certain the child will account this a great injuſtice in his father, to puniſh him for that which himſelf freely does, and ſo he is never likely to be wrought upon by it. This conſideration lays a moſt ſtrict tye upon all Parents to live Chriſtianly, for otherwiſe they do not only hazard their own Souls, but thoſe of their children alſo, and as it were, purchaſe an eſtate of inheritance in Hell.

To bleſs them.

24. A fifth duty of Parents is bleſſing their children; the way of doing that is double, firſt, by their prayer; they are by daily and earneſt prayers to commend them to God's protection and bleſſing, both for their ſpiritual and temporal eſtate; and ſecondly, by their piety; they are to be ſuch perſons themſelves as that a bleſſing may deſcend from them upon their poſterity. This is often promiſed in Scripture to Godly men, that their *ſeed ſhall be bleſſed.* Thus in the ſecond Commandment, God promiſes *to ſhew mercy to the thouſandth generation of them that love him and keep his Commandments.* And it is very obſervable in the *Jews*, that though they were a ſtiff-necked generation, and had very grievouſly provoked God, yet the godlineſs of their fore-fathers, *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, did many times move God to ſave them from deſtruction; on the other ſide, we ſee that even good Men have fared the worſe for the iniquities of their Fathers; thus when *Joſiah* had deſtroyed Idolatry, reſtored God's ſervice, and done good beyond all the Kings that were before him, yet there was an old arrear of *Manaſſeh* his Grandfather, which all this piety of his would not blot out, but he reſolves to caſt *Judah alſo out of his ſight*, as you may read at large,

large, 2 *Kings* 23. If therefore Parents have any bowels, any kindneſs towards their children, any real deſire of their proſperity, let them take care by their own godly life to entail a bleſſing upon them.

To give no unreaſonable commands.

25. Sixthly, Parents muſt take heed, that they uſe their power over their children with equity and moderation, not to oppreſs them with Unreaſonable Commands, only to exerciſe their own authority, but in all things of weight to conſider the real good of their children, and to preſs them to nothing, which may not conſiſt with that. This is a rule whereof Parents may often have uſe, but in none greater than in the buſineſs of marrying their children, wherein many that otherwiſe are good Parents, have been to blame; when out of an eagerneſs of beſtowing them wealthily, they force them to marry utterly againſt their own inclinations, which is a great tyranny, and that which frequently betrays them to a multitude of miſchiefs, ſuch as all the wealth in the world cannot repair. There are two things which Parents ought eſpecially to conſider in the matching their children; the firſt, how they may live Chriſtianly; and to that purpoſe to chuſe a vertuous and pious perſon to link them with; the ſecond is, how they may live chearfully and comfortably in this world; and to that end, though a competency of eſtate may be neceſſary to be regarded, yet ſurely abundance is no way requiſite, and therefore that ſhould not be too vehemently ſought after; that which much more tends to the happineſs of that ſtate, is the mutual kindneſs and liking of the parties, without which marriage is of all other the moſt uncomfortable condition, and therefore no Parent ought to thruſt a child into it. I have now done with the firſt ſort of Relation, that of a Parent.

SUNDAY XV.

Of duty to our Brethren, and Relations, Husband, Wife, Friends, Maſters, Servants.

Dues to Brethren.

Sect. 1. THE ſecond ſort of Relation is that of a Brother, now brotherhood may be two-fold, either natural, or ſpiritual; the latter may in the largeſt extent contain under it all Mankind, all that partake of the ſame nature; but I ſhall not conſider it ſo in this place, having already mentioned thoſe general duties which belong to all as ſuch. I now ſpeak of that natural brotherhood that is between thoſe that are the children of the ſame immediate parent; and the duty of theſe is to have united hearts and affections: This nature points out to them, they partaking in a more eſpecial manner of each others ſubſtance, and therefore ought to have the greateſt tenderneſs and kindneſs, each to other; thus we ſee *Abraham* makes it an argument, why there ſhould be *no contention between him and Lot, becauſe they were brethren*, *Gen.* 13. 8. And though by brethren there is meant only couſins, yet that helps the more ſtrongly to conclude, that this nearer relation is in reaſon to be a greater bar to ſtrife, as alſo that this kindneſs is in ſome degree to be extended to all that have any nearneſs of bloud to us.

Natural.

The neceſſity of Love among Brethren.

2. This Kindneſs and Love between Brethren and Siſters ought to be very firmly grounded in their hearts; if it be not, they will be of all others in moſt danger of diſagreeing; for the continual converſation that is among them whilſt they are at home in the Fathers houſe, will be apt to miniſter ſome occaſion of jar. Beſides, the equality that is among them in reſpect of birth, often makes them inclinable to envy each other, when

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one is in any respect advanced above the other. Thus we see *Josephs* brethren envied him, because he had most of his Fathers love, and *Rachel* envied her sister *Leah*, because she was fruitful; therefore for the preventing of such temptations, let all who have brethren and sisters, possess their mind with a great and real kindness to them, look on them as parts of themselves, and then they will never think fit either to quarrel with them, or to envy them any advantage, any more than one part of the body does another of the same body, but will strive to advance and help forward the good of each other.

Spiritual brotherhood.

3. The second kind of Brotherhood is spiritual; that contains all those who profess the same Faith with us: The Church in our Baptism becomes a Mother to each baptized person; and then surely, they that have the relation of Children to her, must have also the relation of brethren to each other; and to this sort of brethren also we owe a great deal of tenderness and affection; the spiritual bond of Religion should of all others the most closely unite our hearts. This is the Brotherhood which S. *Peter* exhorts us to love, 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. And to it we are in an especial manner bound to do all good offices, *Do good*, saith the Apostle, *to all, but especially to them that are of the houshold of Faith*, *Gal.* 6. 10. Our compassions are to be most melting towards them of all others, in all their needs; Christ tells us, that *whosoever gives but a cup of cold water to any in the name of a Disciple, shall not lose his reward*, *Matth.* 10. 42. From whence we may assure our selves that this peculiar love to Christians as Christians, is very acceptable in his sight.

Our duty to hold communion with these brethren.

4. Several duties there are required of us to these brethren; one principal, is the holding Communion with them, and that first in Doctrine; we are constantly to continue in the belief and profession of all those necessary truths, by which we may be mark'd out as followers and Disciples of Christ. This is that Faith which S. *Jude* speaks of, which was *once delivered to the Saints*, *Jude* 3. by keeping whereof we continue still united to this spiritual brotherhood, in respect of profession, which we must constantly do, what storms and persecutions soever attend it, according to the exhortation of the Apostle, *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* Secondly, we are also, as opportunity serves, to communicate with them in all holy offices; we must be diligent in frequenting the assemblies of the Saints, which is as it were the badge of our profession, and therefore he that willingly withdraws himself from these, gives ground to suspect he will be apt to renounce the other also. But these parts of communion we find strictly maintained by the first Christians, *Acts* 2. 42. *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* They continued, and that stedfastly, they were not frighted from it by any Persecutions, though that were a time wherein they were tried with the sharpest sufferings; which may teach us that it is not the danger that attends this duty, can acquit us of it.

To bear with their Infirmities.

5. Secondly, We are to bear with the infirmities of our Christian brethren, according to the advice of S. *Paul*, *Rom.* 15. 1. *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* If one that holds all necessary Christian truths, happen yet to be in some error, we are not for this, either to forsake his communion, or despise his Person. This S. *Paul* teaches us in the case of that weak brother, *Who by error made a causeless scruple about meats*, *Rom.* 14. where he bids the stronger Christians, that is, those who being better instructed, discerned him to be in an error, yet to receive him nevertheless, and not to despise him; as on the other side, he bids that weak

weak one not to judge the ſtronger. The leſſer differences in opinion muſt be born with on both ſides, and muſt not in the leaſt abate our brotherly charity towards each other.

To reſtore them after falls.

6. Thirdly, We are to endeavour the reſtoring of any fallen brother, that is, to bring him to repentance, after he hath fallen into any ſin. Thus S. *Paul* commands the *Galatians*, that they ſhould *reſtore him that was overtaken in a fault, conſidering themſelves leſt they were alſo tempted.* We are not to look on him as a caſt-away, to give him over as utterly deſperate, neither are we to triumph over him, in reſpect of our own innocence, like the proud *Phariſee* over the poor *Publican*, *Luke* 18. 11. but we are meekly to endeavour his recovery, remembring that our own frailty is ſuch, that we are not ſecure from the like falls.

To Sympathize with them.

7. Fourthly, We are to have a Sympathy and fellow-feeling with theſe brethren, to be nearly toucht with whatſoever befals them, either as they are conſidered in ſociety or in ſingle perſons. In ſociety firſt, and ſo they make up a Church; and that either the univerſal, which is made up of all Believers throughout the world, or any particular Church, which is made up of all the believers in that particular Nation; and whatever happens to either of theſe, either the whole Church in general, or any ſuch ſingle part of it, eſpecially that whereof our ſelves are members, we are to be much affected and moved with it, to rejoyce in all the proſperities, and to mourn and bewail all the breaches and deſolations thereof, and daily and earneſtly to pray with *David*, Pſal. 51. 18. *O be favourable and gracious unto* Sion, *build thou the walls of* Jeruſalem; and that eſpecially when we ſee her in diſtreſs and perſecution. Whoſoever is not thus toucht with the condition of the Church, is not to be look'd on as a living member of it; for as in the natural body every member is concerned in the proſperity of the whole, ſo certainly 'tis here: It was the obſervation of the Pſalmiſt, that *Gods ſervants think upon the ſtones of* Sion, *and pity to ſee her in the duſt*, *Pſal.* 102. 14. and ſurely all his ſervants are ſtill of the ſame temper, cannot look on the ruines and deſolations of the Church, without the greateſt ſorrow and lamentation. Secondly, we are to have this fellow-feeling with our brethren, conſidered as ſingle perſons; We are to account our ſelves concerned in every particular Chriſtian, ſo as to partake with him in all his occaſions either of joy or ſorrow. Thus the Apoſtle exhorts, *Rom.* 12. 14. *Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, weep with them that weep:* And again, 1 *Cor.* 12. under the ſimilitude of the natural body he urges this duty, *Whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoyce with it.* All theſe ſeveral effects of love, we owe to theſe ſpiritual brethren. And this love is that, which Chriſt hath made the badge of his Diſciples, *John* 13. 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have love one to another*; ſo that if we mean not to caſt off diſcipleſhip to Chriſt, we muſt not forſake this love of the brethren.

The Wife owes to the Husband obedience.

8. The third relation is that between Husband and Wife; This is yet much nearer than either of the former, as appears by that Text, *Epheſ.* 5. 31. *A man ſhall leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and they two ſhall be one fleſh.* Several duties there are owing from one of theſe perſons to the other: And firſt for the Wife, ſhe ows Obedience. This is commanded by the Apoſtle, *Col.* 3. 18. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves to your own Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.* They are to render obedience to their Husbands in the Lord, that is, in all lawful commands; for otherwiſe 'tis here, as in the caſe of all other ſuperiors, God muſt be obeyed rather than man,

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and the Wife must not upon her Husbands command do any thing which is forbidden by God. But in all things which do not cross some command of Gods, this precept is of force, and will serve to condemn the peevish stubbornness of many Wives who resist the lawful commands of their Husband, only because they are impatient of this duty of subjection, which God himself requires of them. But it may here be asked, What if the Husband command something, which though it be not unlawful, is yet very inconvenient and imprudent, must the Wife submit to such a command? To this I answer, that it will be no disobedience in her, but duty, calmly and mildly to shew him the inconveniences thereof, and to perswade him to retract that command; but in case she cannot win him to it by fair intreaties, she must neither try sharp language, nor yet finally refuse to obey, nothing but the unlawfulness of the command being sufficient warrant for that.

Fidelity. 9. Secondly, The Wife ows Fidelity to the Husband, and that of two sorts; first, that of the Bed, she must keep her self pure and chast from all strange embraces, and therefore must not so much as give an ear to any that would allure her, but with the greatest abhorrence reject all motions of that sort, and never give any man that has once made such a motion to her, the least opportunity to make a second. Secondly, She ows him likewise Fidelity in the managing those worldly affairs he commits to her, she must order them so, as may be most to her Husbands advantage; and not by deceiving and couzening of him employ his goods to such uses as he allows not of.

Love. 10. Thirdly, She ows him Love, and together with that all friendliness and kindness of conversation: She is to endeavour to bring him as much assistance, and comfort of life, as is possible, that so she may answer that special end of the womans Creation, the being *a help to her Husband*, *Gen.* 2. 13. and this in all conditions, whether health or sickness, wealth or poverty, whatsoever estate God by his providence shall cast him into, she must be as much of comfort and support to him as she can. To this all sullenness and harshness, all brawling and unquietness is directly contrary, for that makes the Wife the burden and plague of the Man, instead of a help and comfort: And sure if it be a fault to behave ones self so to any person, as hath already been shewed, how great must it be to do so to him, to whom the greatest kindness and affection is owing?

The faults of the husband acquit not from these duties. 11. Nor let such Wives think that any faults, or provocations of the Husband can justifie their frowardness; for they will not, either in respect of Religion or discretion. Not in Religion, for where God has absolutely commanded a duty to be paid, 'tis not any unworthiness of the person can excuse from it; nor indiscretion, for the worse a Husband is, the more need there is for the Wife to carry her self with that gentleness and sweetness, that may be most likely to win him. This is the advice S. *Peter* gave the Wives of his time, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1. *Likewise ye Wives be in subjection to your own Husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the conversation of the Wives.* It seems the good behaviour of the Wives was thought a powerful means to win men from Heathenism to Christianity; and sure it might now adays have some good effects, if Women would have but the patience to try it: At the least, 'twould have this, that it would keep some tolerable quiet in Families, whereas on the other side, the ill fruits of the Wives unquietness are so notorious, that there are few neighbourhoods, but can give some instance of it. How many men are there, that to avoid the noise of a froward Wife, have fallen to com-

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pany-keeping, and by that to drunkenneſs, poverty, and a multitude of miſchiefs? Let all Wives therefore beware of adminiſtring that temptation. But whenever there happens any thing, which, in kindneſs to her Husband, ſhe is to admoniſh him of, let it be with that ſoftneſs and mildneſs, that it may appear 'tis love, and not anger that makes her ſpeak.

The Husband ows to the wife love.

12. There are alſo on the Husbands part ſeveral duties; there is firſt Love, which S. *Paul* requires to be very tender and compaſſionate towards the Wife, as appears by the ſimilitudes he uſeth in that matter, *Eph.* 5. The one, that of the love a man bears to his natural body. *No man*, ſays he, Verſe 29. *ever hateth his own fleſh, but nouriſheth it, and cheriſheth it.* The other love is that Chriſt bears to his Church; which is far greater, *verſe* 25. both which he ſets as patterns of this love of Husbands towards their Wives. This utterly forbids all harſhneſs and roughneſs to them; men are to uſe them as parts of themſelves, to love them as their own bodies, and therefore to do nothing that may be hurtful and grievous to them, no more than they would cut and gaſh their own fleſh. Let thoſe Husbands that tyrannize over their Wives, that ſcarce uſe them like humane creatures, conſider whether that be to love them as their own bodies.

Faithfulneſs.

13. A ſecond duty of the Husband, is Faithfulneſs to the bed. This is by God as well required of the Husband, as the Wife; and though the world do ſeem to look on the breach of this duty with leſs abhorrence in the Husband, yet ſure before that juſt Judge, the offence will appear no leſs on the mans ſide, than the womans. This is certain, 'tis in both a breach of the vow made to each other at their Marriage, and ſo beſides the uncleanneſs, a down-right perjury, and thoſe differences in the caſe, which ſeem to caſt the ſcale, are rather in reſpect of civil and worldly conſideration, than merely of the ſin.

Maintenance.

14. A third part of the Husband is to maintain and provide for the Wife. He is to let her partake with him in thoſe outward good things, wherewith God hath bleſt him, and neither by niggardlineſs debar her of what is fit for her, nor yet by unthriftineſs ſo waſte his goods, that he ſhall become unable to ſupport her. This is certainly the duty of the Husband, who being, as hath been ſaid, to account his Wife as a part of his own body, muſt have the very ſame care to ſuſtain her, that he hath for himſelf. Yet this is not ſo to be underſtood, as to excuſe the Wife from her part of labour and induſtry, when that is requiſite, it being unreaſonable the Husband ſhould toil to maintain the Wife in idleneſs.

Inſtruction.

15. Fourthly, The Husband is to inſtruct the Wife, in the things which concern her eternal welfare, if ſhe be ignorant of them. Thus S. *Paul* bids the *Wives learn of their Husbands at home*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 36. which ſuppoſes that the Husband is to teach her. Indeed it belongs to every Maſter of a Family to endeavour that all under his charge be taught all neceſſary things of this kind, and then ſure more eſpecially his Wife, who is ſo much nearer to him than all the reſt. This ſhould make men careful to get knowledge themſelves, that ſo they may be able to perform this duty they owe to others.

Husbands and Wives mutually to pray for and aſſiſt each other in all good.

16. Laſtly, Husbands and Wives are mutually to pray for each other, to beg all bleſſings from God both ſpiritual and temporal, and to endeavour all they can to do all good to one another, eſpecially all good to each others Souls, by ſtirring up to the performance of duty, and diſſwading and drawing back from all ſin, and by being like true yoke-fellows, helpful and aſſiſtant to each other in the doing of all ſorts of good, both to their own Family and all others within their reach. This is of all other the trueſt and moſt valuable love. Nay, indeed, how can it be ſaid they

do love at all, who contentedly let each other run on in a courſe that will bring them to eternal miſery? And if the love of Husbands and Wives were thus grounded in Vertue and Religion, 'twould make their lives a kind of Heaven on earth; 'twould prevent all thoſe contentions and brawlings, ſo common among them, which are the great plagues of Families, and the leſſer Hell in paſſage to the greater; and truly where it is not thus founded, there is little comfort to be expected in marriage.

The vertue of the perſon the chief conſideration in Marriage.

17. It ſhould therefore be the care of every one that means to enter upon that ſtate to conſider adviſedly before-hand, and to chuſe ſuch a perſon with whom they may have this ſpiritual friendſhip, that is, ſuch a one as truly fears God. There are many falſe ends of Marriage lookt upon in the world: Some marry for Wealth, others for Beauty, and generally they are only worldly reſpects that are at all conſidered; but certainly he that would marry as he ought, ſhould contrive to make his Marriage uſeful to thoſe better ends of ſerving God, and ſaving his own Soul; at leaſt he muſt be ſure it be no hindrance to them, and to that purpoſe the vertue of the perſon choſen is more conducing than all the wealth in the world, though I deny not, but that a competency of that may likewiſe be conſidered.

Unlawful Marriages.

18. But above all things let all take heed, that they make not ſuch marriages, as may not only be ill in their effects, but are actual ſins at the time; ſuch are the marriages of thoſe that were formerly promiſed to ſome other, in which caſe 'tis ſure they rightly belong to thoſe, to whom they paſt the firſt promiſe; and then for any other to marry them, during the life of that perſon, is to take the Husband or Wife of that other, which is direct adultery, as *S. Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 7. 3. The like unlawfulneſs there is alſo in the marriage of thoſe, who are within thoſe degrees of kindred forbidden by God, the particulars whereof are ſet down in the 18. and 20. of *Levit.* and whoever marries any that is within any of thoſe degrees of nearneſs, either to himſelf, or to his deceaſed Wife, which is as bad, commits that great ſin of Inceſt, and ſo long as he continues to live with ſuch his unlawful Wife, remains in that fearful guilt. This warineſs in the choice of the perſon to be married, would prevent many ſad effects, which we daily ſee follow ſuch raſh or unlawful matches. It were well therefore if people would look on marriage, as our Church adviſes, as a thing not to be *undertaken lightly, unadviſedly, or wantonly, to ſatisfie mens carnal luſts and appetites; but reverently, diſcreetly, adviſedly, ſoberly, and in the fear of God*; and in ſo doing, no doubt, a bleſſing would follow, which otherwiſe there is little ground to expect. I have now done with this Relation between Husband and Wife.

Friendſhip.

19. The next is that between Friends; and this Relation if it be rightly founded, is of great nearneſs and uſefulneſs; but there is none more generally miſtaken in the world; men uſually call them their friends, with whom they have an intimacy and frequency of converſation, though that intimacy be indeed nothing but an agreement and combination in ſin. The Drunkard thinks him his friend that will keep him company; the deceitful perſon, him that will aid him in his cheats; the proud man, him that will flatter him; And ſo generally in all vices, they are look'd on as friends that advance and further us in them. But God knows this is far from friendſhip; ſuch a friend as this, the Devil himſelf is in the higheſt degree, who is never backward in ſuch offices. The true friendſhip is that of a direct contrary making; 'tis a concurrence and agreement in vertue, not in vice: In ſhort, a true friend loves his friend ſo, that he is very zealous of his good; and certainly he that is really

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ſo, will never be the inſtrument of bringing him to the greateſt evil. The general duty of a friend then muſt be reſolved to be the induſtrious purſuit of his friends real advantages, in which there are ſeveral particulars contained. *Its duties.*

20. As firſt, faithfulneſs in all truſt committed to him by his friend, whether that of goods or ſecrets; he that betrays the truſt of a friend in either, is by all men lookt upon with abhorrence, it being one of the higheſt falſeneſſes and treacheries, and for ſuch treacherous wounds the Wiſe man tells us, *Every friend will depart*, Ecclus. 22. 22. *Faithfulneſs.*

21. Secondly, 'tis the duty of a Friend to be aſſiſting to his friend in all his outward needs; to counſel him when he wants advice; to chear him when he needs comfort; to give him when he wants relief; and to endeavour his reſcue out of any trouble or danger. An admirable example we have of this friendſhip in *Jonathan* to *David*, *he loved him as his own ſoul*, and we ſee he not only contrives for his ſafety when he was in danger, but runs hazards himſelf to reſcue and deliver his friend, draws his fathers anger upon him, to turn it from *David*, as you may read at large, 1 *Sam.* 20. *Aſſiſtance.*

22. The third and higheſt duty of a friend is to be aiding and aſſiſting to the ſoul of his friend, to endeavour to advance that in piety and vertue, by all means within his power, by exhortations and incouragements to all vertue, by earneſt and vehement diſſwaſions from all ſin, and not only thus in general, but by applying to his particular wants, eſpecially by plain and friendly reproofs, where he knows or reaſonably believes there is any fault committed. This is of all others the moſt peculiar duty of a friend, it being indeed that which none elſe is qualified for. Such an unwillingneſs there is in moſt men to hear of their faults, that thoſe that undertake that work, had need have a great pre-poſſeſſion of their hearts, to make them patient of it. Nay, it is ſo generally acknowledged to be the proper work of a friend, that if he omit it, he betrays the offender into ſecurity; his not reproving will be apt to make the other think he does nothing worthy of reproof, and ſo he tacitly acts that baſeſt part of a flatterer, ſooths and cheriſhes him in his ſin; when yet farther it is conſidered how great need all men have at ſome time or other of being admoniſhed, 'twill appear moſt unfriendly, yea, a cruel thing to omit it. We have that natural partiality to our ſelves that we cannot ſo readily diſcern our own miſcarriages, as we do other mens, and therefore 'tis very neceſſary they ſhould ſometimes be ſhewed us by thoſe, who ſee them more clearly; and the doing this at the firſt may prevent the multiplying of more: whereas if we be ſuffered to go unreproved, it often comes to ſuch a habit, that reproofs will do no good. And then how ſhall that perſon be able to anſwer it either to God or himſelf, that has by his ſilence betrayed his friend to this greateſt miſchief? 'Tis the expreſſion of God himſelf ſpeaking of a friend, *Thy friend which is as thine own ſoul*, *Deut.* 13. 6. And ſure we ſhould in this reſpect account our friends as our own ſouls, by having the ſame jealous tenderneſs and watchfulneſs over their ſouls, which we ought to have of our own. It will therefore be very fit for all that have entred any ſtrict friendſhip, to make this one ſpecial article in the agreement, that they ſhall mutually admoniſh and reprove each other; by which means it will become ſuch an avowed part of their friendſhip, that it can never be miſtaken by the reproved party for cenſoriouſneſs or unkindneſs. *Admonition.*

Prayer. 23. Fourthly, to theſe ſeveral parts of kindneſs muſt be added that of Prayer; we muſt not only aſſiſt our friends, our ſelves, in what we can, but we muſt call in the Almighties aid to them, recommending them earneſtly to God for all his bleſſings, both temporal and ſpiritual.

Conſtancy. 24. Laſtly, we muſt be conſtant in our friendſhips, and not out of a lightneſs of humour grow weary of a friend, only becauſe we have had him long. This is great injuſtice to him, who, if he have behaved himſelf well, ought the more to be valued, by how much the longer he has continued to do ſo: And it is great folly in our ſelves, for it is the caſting away the greateſt treaſure of humane life, for ſuch certainly is a tried friend. The wiſeſt of men gives warning of it, *Prov.* 27. 16. *Thine own friend, and thy fathers friend forſake not.* Nay, farther, 'tis not every light offence of a friend, that ſhould make thee renounce his friendſhip, there muſt be ſome allowance made to the infirmities of men, and if thou haſt occaſion to pardon him ſomewhat to day, perhaps thou mayeſt give him opportunity to requite thee to morrow; therefore nothing but unfaithfulneſs, or incorrigible vice ſhould break this band.

Servants owe to their Maſters obedience. 25. The laſt relation is that between Maſters and Servants, both which owe duty to each other. That of the Servant is firſt obedience to all lawful commands; this is expreſly required by the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* 6. 6. *Servants obey in all things your Maſters*, &c. And this obedience muſt not be a grumbling and unwilling one, but ready and chearful, as he there proceeds to exhort, Verſe 7. *with good will doing ſervice*; and to help them herein, they are to conſider, that it is to the Lord, and not unto men. God has commanded ſervants thus to obey their Maſters; and therefore the obedience they pay is to God, which may well make them do it chearfully, how harſh or unworthy ſoever the Maſter be, eſpecially if what the Apoſtle farther urgeth, Verſe 8. be conſidered, *That there is a reward to be expected from God for it.*

Fidelity. 26. The ſecond duty of the Servant is faithfulneſs, and that may be of two ſorts; one as oppoſed to eye ſervice, the other to purloining or defrauding. The firſt part of faithfulneſs is the doing of all true ſervice to his Maſter, not only when his eye is over him, and he expects puniſhment for the omiſſion, but at all times, even when his Maſter is not likely to diſcern his failing; and that Servant that doth not make conſcience of this, is far from being a faithful Servant, this eye-ſervice being by the Apoſtle ſet oppoſite to that ſingleneſs of heart, which he requires of Servants, *Eph.* 6. 5. The ſecond ſort of faithfulneſs conſiſts in the honeſt managery of all things intruſted to him by his Maſter, the not waſting his goods (as the unjuſt Steward was accuſed to have done, *Luke* 16.) whether by careleſs embezelling of them, or by converting any of them to his own uſe without the allowance of his Maſter. This latter is that purloining of which the Apoſtle warns Servants, *Tit.* 2. 10. and is indeed no better than arrant theft; of this kind are all thoſe ways, that the Servant hath of gaining to himſelf, by the loſs and damage of his Maſter, as the being bribed to make ill bargains for him, and many the like: Nay, indeed this ſort of unfaithfulneſs is worſe than common theft, by how much there is a greater truſt repoſed, the betraying whereof adds to the crime. As for the other ſort of unfaithfulneſs, that of waſting, though without gain to themſelves, it differs not much in effect from this, the Maſter may loſe as much by the one as the other, and then what odds is it to him, whether he be robb'd by the covetouſneſs or negligence of his Servant? And it is ſtill the ſame breach of truſt with the former; for every Maſter is ſuppo-

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ſed to intruſt his affairs as well to the care as the honeſty of his Servant: For 'twould be little advantage to the Maſter to be ſecured that his Servant would not himſelf cheat him, whilſt in the mean time he would by his careleſneſs give opportunity to others to do it: Therefore he that does not carefully look to his Maſters profit, deceives his truſt, as well as he that unjuſtly provides for his own.

Submiſſion to rebuke.

27. A third duty of a Servant is patience and meekneſs under the reproofs of his Maſter, *not anſwering again*, as the Apoſtle exhorts, *Tit.* 2. 9. that is, not making ſuch ſurly and rude replies, as may increaſe the Maſters diſpleaſure, a thing too frequent among Servants, even in the juſteſt reprehenſions; whereas S. *Peter* directs them patiently to ſuffer even the moſt undeſerved correction, even when they *do well and ſuffer for it*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 20. But the patient ſuffering of rebuke is not all that is required of Servants in this matter, they muſt alſo mend the fault they are rebuked for, and not think they have done enough, when they have (though never ſo dutifully) given the Maſter the hearing.

Diligence.

28. A fourth Duty of a Servant is Diligence: He muſt conſtantly attend to all thoſe things, which are the duties of his place, and not give himſelf to idleneſs and ſloth, nor yet to company-keeping, gaming, or any other diſorderly courſe, which may take him off from his Maſters buſineſs. All theſe are neceſſary duties of a Servant, which they are carefully and conſcionably to perform, not ſo much to eſcape the Maſter's anger as God's, who will certainly call every one of them to an account, how they have behaved themſelves towards their earthly Maſters.

Maſters owe to their Servants Juſtice.

29. Now on the other ſide, there are ſome things alſo owing from the Maſters to their Servants: As firſt, the Maſter is bound to be juſt to them, in performing thoſe conditions on which they were hired; ſuch are commonly the giving them food and wages, and that Maſter that withholds theſe, is an Oppreſſor.

Admoniti-on.

30. Secondly, The Maſter is to admoniſh and reprove the Servant in caſe of fault, and that not only in faults againſt them, wherein few Maſters are backward, but alſo and more eſpecially in faults againſt God, whereat every Maſter ought to be more troubled than at thoſe which tend only to his own loſs, or inconvenience; the diſhonour of God, and the hazard of the meaneſt Man's Soul, being infinitely more worthy our diſquiet, than any thing of the other kind can be. And therefore when Maſters are preſently on fire for any little negligence or fault of a Servant towards themſelves, and yet can without trouble ſee them run into the greateſt ſins againſt God, 'tis a ſign they conſider their own concernments too much, and God's glory and their Servants Souls too little. This is too commonly the temper of Maſters, they are generally careleſs how their Servants behave themſelves towards God, how diſordered and profane their Families are, and therefore never beſtow any exhortation, or admonition, to perſwade them to vertue, or draw them from vice; ſuch Maſters forget that they muſt one day give an account how they have governed their Families. It is certainly the duty of every Ruler to endeavour to advance Piety and Godlineſs among all thoſe that are under his charge, and that as well in this leſſer dominion of a Family, as in the greater of a Realm or Nation. Of this *David* was ſo careful, that we ſee he profeſſes, *Pſalm* 101. 7. *That no deceitful perſon ſhould dwell in his houſe, that he that told lies ſhould not tarry in his ſight*; ſo much he thought himſelf bound to provide, that his Family might be a kind of Church, an Aſſembly of godly upright perſons; And if all Maſters would endeavour to have theirs ſo, they would beſides

beſides the eternal reward of it hereafter, find a preſent benefit by it, their worldly buſineſs would thrive much the better; for if their Servants were brought to make conſcience of their ways, they would then not dare either to be negligent or falſe.

31. But as it is the duty of Maſters to admoniſh and reprove their Servants, ſo they muſt alſo look to do it in a due manner, that is, ſo as may be moſt likely to do good, not in paſſion and rage, which can never work the Servant to any thing but the deſpiſing or hating him; but with ſuch ſober and grave ſpeeches, as may convince him of his fault, and may alſo aſſure him, that it is a kind deſire of his amendment (and not a willingneſs to wreck his own rage) which makes the Maſter thus to rebuke him.

Good example. 32. A third duty of the Maſter is to ſet good example of honeſty and godlineſs to his Servants, without which 'tis not all the exhortations or reproofs he can uſe will ever do good; or elſe he pulls down more with his example, than 'tis poſſible for him to build with the other, and 'tis madneſs for a drunken or profane Maſter to expect a ſober and godly Family.

Means of Inſtruction. 33. Fourthly, The Maſter is to provide that his Servants may not want means of being inſtructed in their duty, as alſo that they may daily have conſtant times of worſhipping God publickly, by having prayers in the Family: But of this I have ſpoken before under the head of Prayer, and therefore ſhall here ſay no more of it.

Moderation in Command. 34. Fifthy, The Maſter in all affairs of his own, is to give reaſonable and moderate Commands, not laying greater burthens on his Servants, than they are able to bear, particularly not requiring ſo much work, that they ſhall have no time to beſtow on their Souls; as on the other ſide he is not to permit them to live ſo idly as may make them either uſeleſs to him, or may betray themſelves to any ill.

Encouragement in well-doing. 35. Sixthly, The Maſter is to give his Servants encouragement in well doing, by uſing them with that bounty and kindneſs which their faithfulneſs and diligence, and piety deſerves; and finally in all his dealing with them, he is to remember that himſelf hath, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Epheſ.6.9. a Maſter in Heaven*, to whom he muſt give an account of the uſage of his meaneſt Servant on Earth. Thus have I briefly run through thoſe ſeveral Relations to which we owe particular Duty, and ſo have done with that firſt branch of Duty to our Neighbours, that of Juſtice.

SUNDAY XVI.

Other Branches of our Duty to our Neighbour. Of Charity to Mens Souls, Bodies, Goods and Credit.

Charity. *Sect.*1. THE ſecond branch of Duty to our Neighbours, is Charity, or Love. This is the great Goſpel-duty ſo often enjoyned us by Chriſt; the *New Commandment*, as himſelf calls it, *John* 13. 34. *that ye love one another*, and this is again repeated twice in one Chapter, *John* 15. 12, 17. and the firſt Epiſtle of S. *John* is almoſt wholly ſpent in the perſwaſion of this one duty; by which we may ſee it is no matter of indifference, but moſt ſtrictly required of all that profeſs Chriſt. Indeed himſelf has given it as the badge and livery of his Diſciples, *John* 13. 35. *By this ſhall all men know ye are my Diſciples, if ye have love one to another.*

This

This Charity may be conſidered two ways; firſt, in reſpect of the Affections, ſecondly, of the Actions; Charity in the affections is a ſincere kindneſs, which diſpoſes us to wiſh all good to others, and that in all their capacities, in the ſame manner that Juſtice obligeth us to wiſh no hurt to any Man, in reſpect either of his Soul, his Body, his Goods, or his Credit; ſo this firſt part of Charity binds us to wiſh all good to them in all theſe. *In the Affections.*

And firſt for the Soul. If we have any the leaſt ſpark of Charity, we cannot but wiſh all good to mens Souls; thoſe precious things which Chriſt thought worth the ranſoming with his own bloud, may ſurely well challenge our kindneſs, and good wiſhes; and therefore if we do not thus love one another, we are far from obeying that command of loving as he hath loved; for 'twas the Souls of men which he loved ſo tenderly, and both did and ſuffered ſo much for. Of this love of his to Souls there are two great and ſpecial effects: the firſt, the purifying them here by his Grace, the ſecond, the making them everlaſtingly happy in his Glory; and both theſe we are ſo far to copy out in our kindneſs, as to be earneſtly deſirous that all Men ſhould arrive to that purity and holineſs here, which may make them capable of eternal happineſs hereafter. It were to be hoped, that none, that himſelf carried a Soul about him, could be ſo cruel to that of another mans, as not ſincerely to wiſh this, did not experience ſhew us there are ſome perſons, whoſe malice is ſo deviliſh, as to reach even to the direct contrary; the wiſhing not only the ſin, but the damnation of others. Thus may you have ſome, who, in any injury or oppreſſion they ſuffer, make it their only comfort, that their enemies will damn themſelves by it; when alas! that ſhould to a Chriſtian be much more terrible, than any ſuffering they could bring upon him. He that is of this temper, is a diſciple of Satan, not of Chriſt, it being directly contrary to the whole ſcope of that grand Chriſtian precept, of *loving our neighbours as our ſelves.* For it is ſure, no Man that believes there is ſuch a thing as damnation, wiſhes it to himſelf; be he never ſo fond of the ways that lead to it, yet he wiſhes that may not be his journeys end; and therefore by that rule of Charity ſhould as much dread it for his Neighbour. *To mens Souls.*

Secondly, We are to wiſh all good to the Bodies of men, all health and welfare; we are generally tender enough of our own bodies, dread the leaſt pain or ill, that can befal them: Now Charity, by vertue of the forementioned precept, extends this tenderneſs to all others: and whatever we apprehend as grievous to our ſelves, we muſt be unwilling ſhould befal another. The like is to be ſaid of the other two, goods and credit, that as we wiſh our own thriving and reputation, ſo we ſhould likewiſe that of others, or elſe we can never be ſaid to *love our neighbour as our ſelves.* *To their Bodies, Goods, and Credit.*

This Charity of the affections, if it be ſincere, will certainly have theſe ſeveral effects, which are ſo inſeparable from it, that they are often in Scripture accounted as parts of the duty, and ſo moſt ſtrictly required of us; Firſt, it will keep the mind in a peaceable and meek temper towards others, ſo far from ſeeking occaſion of contentions, that no provocation ſhall draw us to it; for where we have kindneſs we ſhall be unapt to quarrel, it being one of the ſpecial qualities of Charity, that it is *not eaſily provoked,* 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. And therefore whoever is unpeaceable, ſhews his heart is deſtitute of this Charity. Secondly, it will breed compaſſion towards all the miſeries of others; every miſhap that befalls where we wiſh well, *Effects of this Charity.*

is a kind of defeat and diſaſter to our ſelves; and therefore if we wiſh well to all, we ſhall be thus concerned in the calamities of all, have a real grief and ſorrow to ſee any in miſery, and that according to the proportion of the ſuffering. Thirdly, it will give us joy in the proſperities of others. *Solomon* obſerves, *Prov.* 13. 19. that *the deſire accompliſhed is ſweet to the ſoul*; and then whoever has this real deſire of his neighbours welfare, his deſire is accompliſhed in their proſperity, and therefore he cannot but have contentment and ſatisfaction in it. Both theſe are together commanded by S. *Paul*, Rom. 12. 12. *Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, weep with them that weep*. Fourthly, it will excite and ſtir up our prayers for others; we are of our ſelves impotent, feeble creatures, unable to beſtow bleſſings, where we moſt wiſh them, therefore if we do indeed deſire the good of others, we muſt ſeek it on their behalf from him, whence every *good and perfect gift cometh*, *James* 1. 17. This is ſo neceſſary a part of Charity, that without it our kindneſs is but an unſignificant thing, a kind of empty complement. For how can he be believed to wiſh well in earneſt, who will not thus put life and efficacy into his wiſhes by forming them into prayers, which will otherwiſe be vain and fruitleſs? The Apoſtle thought not fit to leave Men to their bare wiſhes, but exhorts that ſupplications, prayers and giving of thanks *be made for all men*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. which precept all that have this true charity of the heart, will readily conform to. Theſe ſeverals are ſo naturally the fruits of this Charity, that it is a deceit for any Man to perſwade himſelf he hath it, who cannot produce theſe fruits to evidence it by.

It caſts out Envy. But there is yet a farther excellency of this grace; it guards the mind, and ſecures it from ſeveral great and dangerous vices; as firſt, from Envy: this is by the Apoſtle taught us to be the property of Charity, 1 *Cor.* 13. 4. *Charity envieth not*; and indeed common reaſon may confirm this to us, for envy is a ſorrow at the proſperity of another, and therefore muſt needs be directly contrary to that deſire of it, which we ſhewed before was the effect of love; ſo that if love bear ſway in the heart, 'twill certainly chaſe out Envy. How vainly then do thoſe pretend to this vertue, that are ſtill grudging, and repining at every good hap of others?

Pride. Secondly, it keeps down Pride and Haughtineſs. This is alſo taught us by the Apoſtle in the forementioned place, *Charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up*; and accordingly we find, that where this vertue of love is commanded, there humility is joyned with it. Thus it is, *Col.* 3. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of mind*; and *Rom.* 12. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one towards another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another*, where you ſee how cloſe an attendant Humility is of love. Indeed it naturally flows from it, for love always ſets a price and value upon the thing beloved, makes us eſteem and prize it; thus we too conſtantly find it in ſelf-love, it makes us think highly of our ſelves, that we are much more excellent than other Men. Now if love thus plac'd on our ſelves, beget pride, let us but divert the courſe, and turn this love on our brethren, and it will as ſurely beget humility, for then we ſhould ſee and value thoſe gifts and excellencies of theirs, which now our pride, or our hatred make us to over-look and neglect, and not think it reaſonable either to deſpiſe them, or vaunt and magnifie our ſelves upon ſuch a compariſon; we ſhould certainly find cauſe to put the Apoſtles exhortation in practice, *Phil.* 2. 4. That we ſhould *eſteem others better than our ſelves*. Whoever therefore is of ſo haughty a temper, as to vilifie and diſdain others, may conclude, he hath not this charity rooted in his heart.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It casts out censoriousness and rash judging; Charity, as the Apostle saith, 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. *thinketh no evil*; is not apt to entertain ill conceits of others, but on the contrary, as it follows, Verse 7. *Believeth all things, hopeth all things*; that is, it is forward to believe and hope the best of all Men; and surely our own experience tells us the same, for where we love we are usually unapt to discern faults, be they never so gross (witness the great blindness we generally have towards our own) and therefore shall certainly not be like to create them, where they are not, or to aggravate them beyond their true size and degree: And then to what shall we impute those unmerciful censures and rash judgments of others, so frequent among men, but to the want of this Charity? *Censoriousness.*

Fourthly, It casts out Dissembling and feigned kindness; where this true and real love is, that false and counterfeit one flies from before it, and this is the love we are commanded to have, such as *is without dissimulation, Rom.* 12. 9. Indeed where this is rooted in the heart, there can be no possible use of dissimulation, because this is in truth all that the false one would seem to be, and so is as far beyond it as Nature is beyond Art; nay indeed as a divine vertue is beyond a foul sin, for such is that hypocritical kindness; and yet 'tis to be feared, that does too generally usurp the place of this real Charity; the effects of it are too visible among us, there being nothing more common than to see Men make large professions to those whom, as soon as their backs are turned, they either deride or mischief. *Dissembling.*

Fifthly, It casts out all mercinariness, and self-seeking: 'Tis of so noble and generous a temper, that it despises all projectings for gain or advantage, *Love seeketh not her own*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. And therefore that huckstering kind of love so much used in the World, which places it self only there, where it may fetch in benefit, is very far from this Charity. *Self-seeking.*

Lastly, It turns out of the heart all malice and desire of Revenge, which is so utterly contrary to it, that it is impossible they should both dwell in the same breast; 'tis the property of love to *bear all things*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 7. to endure the greatest injuries, without thought of making any other return to them than prayers and blessings, and therefore the malicious revengeful person is of all others the greatest stranger to this Charity. *Revenge.*

'Tis true, if this vertue were to be exercised but towards some sort of persons, it might consist with malice to others, it being possible for a Man that bitterly hates one, to love another: But we are to take notice that this Charity must not be so confined, but must extend and stretch it self to all Men in the world, particularly to Enemies, or else it is not that divine Charity commended to us by Christ. The loving of friends and benefactors is so low a pitch, that the very Publicans and sinners, the worst of Men, were able to attain to it, *Matth.* 5. 46. And therefore 'tis not counted rewardable in a Disciple of Christ; no, he expects we should soar higher, and therefore hath set us this more spiritual and excellent precept of loving of enemies, *Matt.* 4. 44. *I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*, and whosoever does not thus, will never be owned by him for a Disciple. We are therefore to conclude, that all which hath been said concerning this Charity of the Affections, must be understood to belong as well to our spitefullest enemy, as our most obliging friend; but because this is a duty to which the froward nature of Man is apt to object much, 'twill not be amiss to insist a little on some considerations which may enforce it on us. *This charity to be extended even to enemies.*

And first, consider what hath been already toucht on, that it is the Command of Christ, both in the Texts above mentioned, and multitudes of *Motives thereunto. Command of Christ.*

of others; there being ſcarce any precept ſo often repeated in the New Teſtament, as this of loving and forgiving of our enemies. Thus *Epheſ.* 4. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another*; And again, *Col.* 3. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* So alſo 1 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Not rendring evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwiſe Bleſſings.* A whole Volume of Texts might be brought to this purpoſe, but theſe are certainly enough to convince any Man, that this is ſtrictly required of us by Chriſt, and indeed I think, there are few that ever heard of the Goſpel, but know it is ſo. The more prodigiouſly ſtrange is it, that Men that call themſelves Chriſtians, ſhould give no degree of obedience to it, nay, not only ſo, but even publickly avow and profeſs the contrary, as we daily ſee they do, it being ordinary to have Men reſolve, and declare that they will not forgive ſuch, or ſuch a Man, and no conſideration of Chriſts command can at all move them from their purpoſe. Certainly theſe Men underſtand not what is meant by the very word Chriſtian, which ſignifies a Servant and Diſciple of Chriſt, and this Charity is the very badge of the one, and leſſon of the other: And therefore 'tis the greateſt abſurdity, and contradiction, to profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, and yet at the ſame time to reſiſt this ſo expreſs Command of that Chriſt, whom they own as their Maſter. *If I be a Maſter*, ſaith God, *where is my fear, Mal.* 1. 6. Obedience and reverence are ſo much the duties of Servants, that no Man is thought to look on him as a Maſter, to whom he pays them not. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I ſay?* ſaith Chriſt, *Luke* 6. 46. The whole world is divided into two great Families, Chriſts and Satans, and the obedience each man pays, ſignifies to which of theſe Maſters he belongs; if he obey Chriſt, to Chriſt; if Satan, to Satan. Now this ſin of malice and revenge is ſo much the dictate of that wicked ſpirit, that there is nothing can be a more direct obeying of him; 'tis the taking his livery on our backs, the proclamation whoſe Servants we are. What ridiculous impudence is it then, for Men that have thus entred themſelves of Satans Family, to pretend to be the Servants of Chriſt? Let ſuch know aſſuredly, that they ſhall not be owned by him, but at the great day of account, be turned over to their proper Maſter, to receive their wages in fire and brimſtone.

Example of God. A ſecond conſideration is the example of God; this is an argument Chriſt himſelf thought fit to uſe, to impreſs this duty on us, as you may ſee, *Luke* 6. 35, 36. Where after having given the Command of loving Enemies, he encourages to the practice of it, by telling, that it is that which will make us the *Children of the higheſt* (that is, 'twill give us a likeneſs and reſemblance to him, as children have to their Parents) *for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil*; And to the ſame purpoſe you may read, *Matth.* 5. 45. *He maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt*; and ſure this is a moſt forcible conſideration to excite us to this duty. God, we know, is the fountain of perfection, and the being like to him, is the ſum of all we can wiſh for; and though it was *Lucifers* fall, his ambition to be like the moſt high, yet had the likeneſs he affected been only that of Holineſs and goodneſs, he might ſtill have been an Angel of light; This deſire of imitating our Heavenly Father is the eſpecial mark of a child of his. Now this kindneſs and goodneſs to enemies is moſt eminently remarkable in God, and that not only in reſpect of the temporal mercies, which he indifferently beſtows on all, his *ſun and rain on the unjuſt*, as in the text forementioned, but chiefly in his ſpiritual

Mercies.

Mercies. We are all by our wicked works, *Col.* 1. 21. *Enemies to him*, and the miſchief of that enmity would have fallen wholly upon our ſelves; God had no motive beſides that of his pity to us, to wiſh a reconciliation; yet ſo far was he from returning our enmity, when he might have revenged himſelf to our eternal ruine, that he deſigns and contrives how he may bring us to be at peace with him. This is a huge degree of mercy and kindneſs, but the means he uſed for effecting this, is yet far beyond it; He ſent his own Son from Heaven to work it, and that not only by perſwaſions, but ſufferings alſo; ſo much did he prize us miſerable creatures, that he thought us not too dear bought with the bloud of his Son. The like example of mercy and patience we have in Chriſt, both in *laying down his life for us Enemies*, and alſo in that meek manner of doing it, which we find excellently ſet forth by the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22, 23, 24. and commended to our imitation. Now ſurely when all this is conſidered, we may well make S. *John's* inference; *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another*, 1 *John* 4. 11. How ſhameful a thing is it for us to retain diſpleaſures againſt our brethren, when God thus lays by his towards us, and that when we have ſo highly provoked him?

The diſproportion between our offences againſt God, and mens againſt us.

This directs to a third conſideration, the comparing our ſins againſt God, with the offences of our brethren againſt us, which we no ſooner ſhall come to do, but there will appear a vaſt difference between them, and that in ſeveral reſpects: For firſt, there is the Majeſty of the perſon againſt whom we ſin, which exceedingly encreaſes the guilt, whereas between man and man, there cannot be ſo great a diſtance; for though ſome men are by God advanced to ſuch eminency of dignity as may make an injury offered to them the greater, yet ſtill they are but men of the ſame nature with us, whereas he is God bleſſed for ever. Secondly, there is his ſoveraignty and power, which is original in God, for we are his creatures, we have received our whole being from him, and therefore are in the deepeſt manner bound to perfect obedience; whereas all the ſoveraignty that one man can poſſibly have over another, is but imparted to them by God, and for the moſt part there is none of this neither in the caſe, quarrels being moſt uſual among equals. Thirdly, there is his infinite bounty and goodneſs to us; all that ever we enjoy, whether in relation to this life or a better, being wholly his free gift, and ſo there is the fouleſt ingratitude added to our other crimes; in which reſpect alſo 'tis impoſſible for one man to offend againſt another in ſuch a degree, for though one may be (and too many are) guilty of unthankfulneſs towards men, yet becauſe the greateſt benefits that man can beſtow, are infinitely ſhort of thoſe which God doth, the ingratitude cannot be near ſo great as towards God it is. Laſtly, there is the greatneſs and multitude of our ſins againſt God, which do infinitely exceed all that the moſt injurious man can do againſt us; for we all ſin much oftner and more hainouſly againſt him, than any man, be he never ſo malicious, can find opportunities of injuring his brethren. This inequality and diſproportion our Saviour intimates in the parable, *Matth.* 8. where our offences againſt God are noted by the ten thouſand talents, whereas our brethrens againſt us are deſcribed by the hundred pence; a talent hugely out-weighs a penny, and ten thouſand out-numbers a hundred, yet ſo and much more does the weight and number of our ſins exceed all the offences of others againſt us. Much more might be ſaid to ſhew the vaſt inequality between the faults which God forgives us, and thoſe we can poſſibly have to forgive our brethren: But this I ſuppoſe may ſuffice to ſilence all the objections of cruel and revengeful perſons,

againſt this kindneſs to enemies. They are apt to look upon it as an abſurd and unreaſonable thing, but ſince God himſelf acts it in ſo much an higher degree, who can without blaſphemy ſay 'tis unreaſonable? If this, or any other ſpiritual duty appear ſo to us, we may learn the reaſon from the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *The carnal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him*; 'tis the carnality and fleſhlineſs of our hearts that makes it ſeem ſo, and therefore inſtead of diſputing againſt the duty, let us purge our hearts of that, and then we ſhall find that true which the ſpiritual Wiſdom affirms of her Doctrines, *Prov.* 8. 9. *They are all plain to him that underſtandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.*

Pleaſantneſs of this Duty.

Nay, this loving of enemies is not only a reaſonable, but a pleaſant duty, and that I ſuppoſe as a fourth conſideration; there is a great deal of ſweetneſs and delight to be found in it. Of this I confeſs none can ſo well judge as thoſe that have practiſed it, the nature even of earthly pleaſures being ſuch, that 'tis the enjoyment only that can make a man truly know them. No man can ſo deſcribe the taſte of any delicious thing to another, as that by it he ſhall know the reliſh of it: He muſt firſt actually taſte of it: And ſure 'tis ~~no~~ *much* more ſo in ſpiritual pleaſures, and therefore he that would fully know the ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs of this duty, let him ſet to the practice, and then his own experience will be the beſt informer. But in the mean time how very unjuſt, yea and fooliſh is it, to pronounce ill of it before trial? For men to ſay, This is irkſom and intolerable, who never ſo much as once offered to try whether indeed it were ſo or no? Yet by this very means an ill opinion is brought up of this moſt delightful duty, and paſſes currant among men, whereas in all juſtice the teſtimony of it ſhould be taken only from thoſe who have tried it: And they would certainly give another account of it.

But though the full knowledge hereof be to be had only by this nearer acquaintance, yet methinks even thoſe who look at it but at a diſtance may diſcern ſomewhat of amiableneſs in it, if no other way, yet at leaſt by comparing it with the uneaſineſs of its contrary. Malice and Revenge are the moſt reſtleſs, tormenting paſſions that can poſſeſs the mind of a man, they keep men in perpetual ſtudy and care how to effect their miſchievous purpoſes, it diſturbs their very ſleep, as *Solomon* obſerves, *Prov.* 4. 16. *They ſleep not except they have done miſchief, and their ſleep is taken away, except they cauſe ſome to fall:* Yea, it imbitters all the good things they enjoy, ſo that they have no taſte or reliſh of them. A remarkable example of this we have in *Haman*, who though he abounded in all the greatneſs and felicity of the world, yet the malice he had to a poor deſpicable man, *Mordecai*, kept him from taſting contentment in all this, as you may ſee, *Eſther* 5. where after he had related to his friends all his proſperities, *ver.* 11. he concludes thus, *ver.* 12. *Yet all this availeth me nothing, ſo long as I ſee* Mordecai *the Jew ſitting in the Kings Gate.* On the other ſide, the peaceable ſpirit, that can quietly paſs by all injuries and affronts, enjoys a continual calm, and is above the malice of his enemies; for let them do what they can, they cannot rob him of his quiet, he is firm as a rock, which no ſtorms or winds can move, when the furious and revengeful man is like a wave, which the leaſt blaſt toſſes and tumbles from its place. But beſides this inward diſquiet of revengeful men, they often bring many outward calamities upon themſelves, they exaſperate their enemies, and provoke them to do them greater miſchiefs, nay, oftentimes they willingly run themſelves upon the greateſt miſeries in purſuit of their revenge, to which 'tis ordinary to ſee men ſacrifice Goods, Eaſe, Credit, Life, nay, Soul

it ſelf, not caring what they ſuffer themſelves, ſo they may ſpite their enemy; ſo ſtrangely does this wretched humor beſot and blind them. On the contrary, the meek perſon he often melts his adverſary, pacifies his anger; *A ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 15. 1. And ſure there is nothing can tend more to that end; but if it do happen that his enemy be ſo inhumane, that he miſs of doing that, yet he is ſtill a gainer by all he can ſuffer. For firſt, he gains an opportunity of exerciſing that moſt Chriſtian grace of charity and forgiveneſs; and ſo at once of obeying the command, and imitating the example of his Saviour, which is to a true Chriſtian ſpirit a moſt valuable advantage; and then ſecondly, he gains an acceſſion and increaſe to his reward hereafter. And if it be objected, that that is not to be reckoned in to the preſent pleaſure of the duty: I anſwer, that the expectation and belief of it is, and that alone is a delight infinitely more raviſhing than the preſent enjoyment of all ſenſual pleaſure can be.

The fourth conſideration is, the dangers of not performing this Duty; of which I might reckon up divers, but I ſhall inſiſt only on that great one, which contains in it all the reſt, and that is the forfeiting of our own pardons from God, the having our ſins againſt him kept ſtill on his ſcore and not forgiven. This is a conſideration, that methinks ſhould affright us into good nature; if it do not, our malice is greater to our ſelves than to our enemies. For alas! what hurt is it poſſible for thee to do to another, which can bear any compariſon with that thou doeſt thy ſelf, in loſing the pardon of thy ſins? which is ſo unſpeakable a miſchief, that the Devil himſelf with all his malice cannot wiſh a greater. 'Tis all he aims at, firſt, that we may ſin, and then that thoſe ſins may never be pardoned, for then he knows he has us ſure enough; Hell, and damnation being certainly the portion of every unpardoned ſinner, beſides all other effects of Gods wrath in this life. Conſider this, and then tell me what thou haſt got by the higheſt revenge thou ever actedſt upon another. 'Tis a Deviliſh phraſe in the mouth of men, *that revenge is ſweet*: but is it poſſible there can be (even to the moſt diſtemperate palate) any ſuch ſweetneſs in it, as may recompence that everlaſting bitterneſs that attends it? 'Tis certain no man in his wits can upon ſober judging, imagine there is. But alas! we give not our ſelves time to weigh things, but ſuffer our ſelves to be hurried away with the heat of an angry humor, never conſidering how dear we muſt pay for it: like the ſilly Bee, that in anger leaves at once her ſting and her life behind her; the ſting may perhaps give ſome ſhort pain to the fleſh it ſticks in, but yet there is none but diſcerns the Bee has the worſt of it, that pays her life for ſo poor a revenge: So it is in the greateſt act of our malice, we may perhaps leave our ſtings in others, put them to ſome preſent trouble, but that compared with the hurt redounds to our ſelves by it, is no more than that inconſiderable pain is to death; Nay, not ſo much, becauſe the miſchiefs that we bring upon our ſelves are eternal, to which no finite thing can bear any proportion. Remember then, whenſoever thou art contriving and plotting a revenge, that thou quite miſtakeſt the mark; thou thinkeſt to hit the enemy, and alas! thou woundeſt thy ſelf to death. And let no man ſpeak peace to himſelf, or think that theſe are vain terrors, and that he may obtain pardon from God, though he give none to his brethren. For he that is truth it ſelf has aſſured us the contrary, *Matt.* 6. 15. *If ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your father forgive your treſpaſſes.* And leſt we ſhould forget the neceſſity of this duty, he hath inſerted it in our daily Prayers, where

If we forgive not, God will not forgive us.

where we make it the condition, on which we beg pardon from God; *Forgive us our treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* What a heavy curſe then does every revengful perſon lay upon himſelf, when he ſays this Prayer? He does in effect beg God not to forgive him; and 'tis too ſure that part of his Prayer will be heard, he ſhall be forgiven juſt as he forgives, that is, not at all. This is yet farther ſet out to us in the Parable of the Lord and the Servant, *Matth.* 18. The ſervant had obtained of his Lord the forgiveneſs of a vaſt debt, ten thouſand talents, yet was ſo cruel to his fellow-ſervant, as to exact a poor trifling ſome of an hundred pence, upon which his Lord recals his former forgiveneſs, and charges him again with the whole debt: and this Chriſt applies to our preſent purpoſe, *Ver.* 35. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every man his brother their treſpaſſes.* One ſuch act of uncharitableneſs is able to forfeit us the pardon God hath granted us, and then all our ſins return again upon us, and ſink us to utter ruine. I ſuppoſe it needleſs to heap up more teſtimonies of Scripture for the truth of this; theſe are ſo clear, as may ſurely ſerve to perſwade any man, that acknowledges Scripture, of the great and fearful danger of this ſin of uncharitableneſs. The Lord poſſeſs all our hearts with ſuch a juſt ſenſe of it as may make us avoid it.

Gratitude to God. The laſt conſideration I ſhall mention, is that of Gratitude. God has ſhewed wonderful mercies to us, Chriſt has ſuffered heavy things to bring us into a capacity of that mercy and pardon from God: And ſhall we not then think our ſelves obliged to ſome returns of thankfulneſs? If we will take the Apoſtles judgment, he tells us, 2 *Cor.* 5. 15. *That ſince Chriſt died for us all, 'tis but reaſonable that we ſhould not henceforth live unto our ſelves, but unto him that died for us.* Indeed were every moment of our life conſecrated to his immediate Service, 'twere no more than common gratitude requires, and far leſs than ſuch ineſtimable benefits deſerve; what a ſhameful unthankfulneſs is it then to deny him ſo poor a ſatisfaction as this, the forgiving our brethren? Suppoſe a man that were ranſomed either from death or ſlavery, by the bounty and ſufferings of another, ſhould upon his releaſe be charg'd by him that ſo freed him, in return of that kindneſs of his, to forgive ſome ſlight debt, which was owing him by ſome third perſon, would you not think him the unthankfuleſt wretch in the world, that ſhould refuſe this ſo great a benefactor? Yet ſuch a wretch and much worſe is every revengeful perſon: Chriſt hath bought us out of eternal ſlavery, and that not with *corruptible things as ſilver and gold,* 1 Pet. 1. 10. *but with his own moſt precious bloud,* and hath earneſtly recommended to us the love of our brethren, and that with the moſt moving arguments, drawn from the greatneſs of his love to us; and if we ſhall obſtinately refuſe him in ſo juſt, ſo moderate a demand, how unſpeakable a vileneſs is it? And yet this we do down-right, if we keep any malice or grudge to any perſon whatſoever. Nay farther, this is not barely an unthankfulneſs, but there is alſo joyned with it a horrible contempt and deſpiſing of him. This Peace and unity of brethren was a thing ſo much prized and valued by him, that when he was to leave the World, he thought it the moſt precious thing he could bequeath, and therefore left it by way of Legacy to his Diſciples, *John* 14. 27. *Peace I leave with you.* We uſe to ſet a great value on the ſlighteſt bequeſts of our dead friends, to be exceeding careful not to loſe them; and therefore if we wilfully bangle away this ſo precious a Legacy of Chriſt, 'tis a plain ſign we want that Love and eſteem of him, which we have of our earthly friends,

and

and that we deſpiſe him as well as his Legacy. The great prevailing of this ſin of uncharitableneſs has made me ſtand thus long on theſe conſiderations, for the ſubduing it. *God grant they may make ſuch impreſſion on the Reader, as may be available to that purpoſe.*

I ſhall add only this one advice, that theſe, or whatſoever other remedies againſt this ſin, muſt be uſed timely: 'Tis oft-times the fruſtrating of bodily medicines, the applying them too late; and 'tis much oftner ſo in ſpiritual: Therefore if it be poſſible, let theſe and the like conſiderations be ſo conſtantly and habitually fixt in thy heart, that they may frame it to ſuch meekneſs, as may prevent all riſings of rancour or revenge in thee, for it is much better they ſhould ſerve as armour to prevent, than as balſom to cure the wound. But if this paſſion be not yet ſo ſubdued in thee, but that there will be ſome ſtirrings of it, yet then be ſure to take it at the very firſt riſe, and let not thy fancy chew, as it were, upon the injury by often rolling it in thy mind, but remember betimes the foregoing conſiderations, and withal, that this is a time and ſeaſon of trial to thee, wherein thou mayeſt ſhew thou haſt profited in Chriſts School, there now being an opportunity offered thee either of obeying and pleaſing God, by paſſing by this offence of thy brother, or elſe of obeying and pleaſing Satan, that lover of diſcord, by nouriſhing hatred againſt him. Remember this, I ſay, betimes, before thou be enflamed, for if this fire be throughly kindled, it will caſt ſuch a ſmoak, as will blind thy reaſon, and make thee unfit to judge even in this ſo very plain a caſe, whether it be better by obeying God, to purchaſe to thy ſelf eternal bliſs; or by obeying Satan, eternal torments. Whereas, if thou put the queſtion to thy ſelf before this commotion and diſturbance of mind, 'tis impoſſible but thy underſtanding muſt pronounce for God; And then unleſs thou wilt be ſo perverſe that thou wilt deliberately chuſe death, thou wilt ſurely practiſe according to that ſentence of thy underſtanding. I ſhall add no more on this firſt part of Charity, that of the Affections.

The firſt riſing of rancour to be ſuppreſt.

I proceed now to that of the Actions; And this indeed is it, whereby the former muſt be approved, we may pretend great charity within, but if none break forth in the Actions, we may ſay of that Love, as S. *James* doth of the Faith he ſpeaks of, *that it is dead, Jam.* 2. 20. It is the Loving in deed, that muſt *approve our hearts before God,* 1 *John* 3.18. Now this love in the Actions may likewiſe fitly be diſtributed, as the former was, in relation to the four diſtinct capacities of our brethren, their Souls, their Bodies, their Goods and Credit.

Charity in the actions.

The Soul, I formerly told you, may be conſidered either in a Natural or Spiritual ſence, and in both of them Charity binds us to do all the good we can. As the Soul ſignifies the Mind of a man, ſo we are to endeavour the comfort and refreſhment of our brethren, deſire to give them all true cauſe of joy and chearfulneſs; eſpecially when we ſee any under any ſadneſs or heavineſs, then to bring out all the cordials we can procure, that is, to labour by all Chriſtian and fit means to chear the troubled ſpirits of our brethren, to *comfort them that are in any heavineſs,* as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4.

Towards the mind of our Neighbour.

But the Soul in the Spiritual ſence is yet of greater concernment, and the ſecuring of that is a matter of much greater moment, than the refreſhing of the mind only, in as much as the eternal ſorrows and ſadneſſes of Hell exceed the deepeſt ſorrows of this life; and therefore though we muſt not omit the former, yet on this we are to employ our moſt zealous charities; wherein we are not to content our ſelves with a bare wiſhing well to the

His Soul.

Souls

Souls of our brethren, this alone is a ſluggiſh ſort of kindneſs, unworthy of thoſe who are to imitate the great Redeemer of Souls, who did and ſuffered ſo much in that purchaſe: no, we muſt add alſo our endeavour to make them that we wiſh them; to this purpoſe it were very reaſonable to propound to our ſelves in all our converſings with others, that one great deſign of doing ſome good to their Souls. If this purpoſe were fixt in our minds, we ſhould then diſcern perhaps many opportunities, which now we overlook, of doing ſomething towards it. The brutiſh ignorance of one would call upon thee to endeavour his inſtruction; the open ſin of another, to reprehend and admoniſh him: the faint and weak vertue of another, to confirm and encourage him. Every ſpiritual want of thy brother may give thee ſome occaſion of exerciſing ſome part of this Charity, or if thy circumſtances be ſuch, that upon ſober judging thou think it vain to attempt any thing thy ſelf, as if either thy meanneſs, or thy unacquaintedneſs, or any the like impediment be like to render thy exhortations fruitleſs, yet if thou art induſtrious in thy Charity, thou mayeſt probably find out ſome other inſtrument, by whom to do it more ſucceſsfully. There cannot be a nobler ſtudy than how to benefit mens Souls, and therefore where the direct means are improper, 'tis fit we ſhould whet our wits for attaining of others. Indeed 'tis a ſhame, we ſhould not as induſtriouſly contrive for this great ſpiritual concernment of others, as we do for every worldly trifling intereſt of our own; yet in them we are unwearied, and try one means after another, till we compaſs our end. But if after all our ſerious endeavours, the obſtinacy of men do not ſuffer us, or themſelves rather, to reap any fruit from them, if all our wooings and intreatings of men to have mercy on their own Souls will not work on them, yet be ſure to continue ſtill to exhort by thy example. Let thy great care and tenderneſs of thy own Soul preach to them the value of theirs, and give not over thy compaſſions to them, but with the Prophet, *Jer.* 13. 17. *Let thy Soul weep in ſecret for them*; and with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Let rivers of waters run down thine eyes, becauſe they keep not Gods Law*, Pſal. 119. 136. Yea with Chriſt himſelf weep over them, *who will not know the things that belong to their peace*, *Luke* 19. 42. And when no importunities with them will work, yet even then ceaſe not to importune God for them, that he will draw them to himſelf. Thus we ſee *Samuel*, when he could not diſſwade the people from that ſinful purpoſe they were upon, yet he profeſſes notwithſtanding, that he will not ceaſe praying for them; nay, he lookt on it as ſo much a duty, that it would be ſin for him to omit it, *God forbid*, ſays he, *that I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you*, 1 *Sam.* 12. 23. Nor ſhall we need to fear that our prayers will be quite loſt, for if they prevail not for thoſe for whom we pour them out, yet however they will return into our own boſoms, *Pſal.* 35. 13. we ſhall be ſure not to miſs of the reward of that Charity.

Charity in reſpect of the Body.

In the ſecond place, we are to exerciſe this Active Charity toward the bodies of our Neighbours; we are not only to compaſſionate their pains and miſeries, but alſo to do what we can for their eaſe and relief. The good *Samaritan*, *Luke* 10. had never been propoſed as our pattern, had he not as well helped as pitied the wounded man. 'Tis not good wiſhes, no nor good words neither that avail in ſuch caſes, as S. *James* tells us, *If a brother or ſiſter be naked and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithſtanding ye give him not thoſe things that are needful for the body, what doth it profit?* *James* 2. 15, 16. No ſure, it profits them nothing in reſpect of their bodies, and it will

will profit thee as little in respect of thy Soul, it will never be reckoned to thee as a Charity. This relieving of the bodily wants of our brethren, is a thing so strictly required of us, that we find it set down, *Matth.* 25. as the especial thing we shall be tried by at the Last day, on the omission whereof is grounded that dreadful sentence, *vers.* 41. *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And if it shall now be asked what are the particular acts of this kind which we are to perform? I think we cannot better inform our selves for the frequent and ordinary ones than from this Chapter, where are set down these severals, *The giving meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, harbouring the stranger, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and imprisoned*; by which visiting is meant not a bare coming to see them, but so coming as to comfort and relieve them; for otherwise it will be but like the *Levite* in the Gospel, *Luke* 10. who came and *looked on the wounded man*, but did no more, which will never be accepted by God. These are common and ordinary exercises of this Charity, for which we cannot want frequent opportunities. But besides these there may sometimes by Gods especial providence fall into our hands, occasions of doing other good offices to the bodies of our Neighbours; we may sometimes find a wounded man with the *Samaritan*, and then 'tis our duty to do as he did; we may sometimes find an innocent person condemned to death, as *Susanna* was, and then are with *Daniel* to use all possible endeavour for their deliverances. This case *Solomon* seems to refer to, *Prov.* 24. 11. *If thou forbear to deliver him that is drawn unto death, and them that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we know it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider? and he that keepeth thy Soul, doth not he know it? shall not he render to every man according to his deeds?* We are not lightly to put off the matter with vain excuses, but to remember that God, who knows our most secret thoughts, will severely examine, whether we have willingly omitted the performance of such a Charity. Sometimes again (nay, God knows often now adays) we may see a Man that by a course of intemperance is in danger to destroy his health, to shorten his days, and then it is a due Charity not only to the Soul, but to the Body also, to endeavour to draw him from it. It's impossible to set down all the possible acts of this corporal Charity, because there may sometimes happen such opportunities as none can foresee; we are therefore always to carry about us a serious resolution of doing whatever good of this kind we shall at any time discern occasion for, and then whenever that occasion is offered, we are to look on it as a call, as it were from Heaven, to put that resolution in practice. This part of Charity seems to be so much implanted in our natures as we are men, that we generally account them not only unchristian, but inhumane that are void of it; and therefore I hope there will not need much perswasion to it, since our very nature enclines us; but certainly that very consideration will serve hugely to increase the guilt of those that are wanting in it: For since this command is so agreeable even to flesh and bloud, our disobedience to it can proceed from nothing but a stubbornness and resistance against God who gives it.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

SUNDAY XVII.

Of Charity; Alms-giving, &c. Of Charity in respect of our Neighbours Credit, &c. Of Peace-making: Of going to Law: Of Charity to our Enemies, &c.

Charity in respect of the Goods.

Sect. 1. THE third way of expressing this Charity is towards the Goods or Estate of our Neighbour; we are to endeavour his thriving and prosperity in these outward good things; and to that end, be willing to assist and further him in all honest ways of improving or preserving them, by any neighbourly and friendly office; Opportunities of this do many times fall out. A man may sometimes by his power or perswasion deliver his Neighbours goods out of the hands of a thief or oppressor; sometimes again by his advice and counsel, he may set him in a way of thriving, or turn him from some ruinous course; and many other occasions there may be of doing good turns to another, without any loss or damage to our selves; and then we are to do them, even to our rich Neighbours, those that are as wealthy (perhaps much more so) as our selves; for though Charity do not bind us to give to those that want less than our selves, yet whenever we can further their profit without lessening our own store, it requires it of us: Nay, if the damage be but light to us in comparison of the advantage to him, it will become us rather to hazard that light damage, than lose him that greater advantage.

Towards the Rich.

Towards the Poor.

2. But towards our poor brother, Charity ties us to much more; we are there only to consider the supplying of his wants, and not to stick at parting with what is our own, to relieve him, but as far as we are able give freely what is necessary to him. This duty of Alms-giving is perfectly necessary for the approving our love not only to men, but even to God himself, as S. *John* tells us, 1 *John* 3. 17. *Whoso hath this worlds goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* 'Tis vain for him to pretend to love either God or Man, who loves his Money so much better, that he will see his poor brother (who is a man, and bears the Image of God) suffer all extremities, rather than part with any thing to relieve him. On the other side, the performance of this duty is highly acceptable with God, as well as with Men.

3. 'Tis called, *Heb.* 13. 16. *A sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased*, and again, *Phil.* 4. 18. S. *Paul* calls their Alms to him, *A Sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God*, and the Church hath always look'd on it as such; and therefore joyned it with the solemnest part of worship, the holy Sacrament. But because even Sacrifices themselves under the Law, were often made unacceptable by being maimed and blemished, it will here be necessary to enquire what are the due qualifications of this Sacrifice.

Motives of Alms-giving.

4. Of these there are some that respect the motive, some the manner of our giving. The motive may be threefold, respecting God, our Neighbour and our selves. That which respects God is obedience and thankfulness to him: he has commanded we should give alms, and therefore one special end of our doing so, must be the obeying that precept of his. And it is from his bounty alone that we receive all our plenty, and this is the propereſt way of expressing our thankfulness for it, for as the *Psalmist* saith, *our goodness extendeth not unto God, Psal.* 16. 2. That tribute which we desire to pay out of our estates, we cannot pay to his person. 'Tis the Poor, that are as it were his Proxy and receivers, and therefore whatever we should by way of thankfulness

give

give back again unto God, our alms is the way of doing it. Secondly, in reſpect of our neighbour, the motive muſt be a true love and compaſſion to him, a tender fellow-feeling of his wants, and deſire of his comfort and relief. Thirdly, in reſpect of our ſelves, the motive is to be the hope of that eternal reward promiſed to this performance. This Chriſt points out to us, when he bids us *Lay up our treaſure in Heaven*, Mat. 6. 20. And to *make us friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that they may receive us into everlaſting habitations*, *Luk.* 16. 9. that is, by a charitable diſpenſing of our temporal goods to the Poor, to lay up a ſtock in Heaven, to gain a title to thoſe endleſs felicities, which God hath promiſed to the charitable. That is the harveſt we muſt expect of what we ſow in theſe works of mercy, which will be ſo rich as would abundantly recompence us, though we ſhould as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. *Beſtow all our goods to feed the poor*: But then we muſt be ſure we make this our ſole aim, and not inſtead of this, propoſe to our ſelves the praiſe of men, as the motive of our charity, that will rob us of the other; this is expreſly told us by Chriſt, *Mat.* 6. They that ſet their hearts on the credit they ſhall gain with men, muſt take that as their portion, *ver.* 3. *Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward*; they chuſe, it ſeems, rather to have Men their Pay-maſters, than God, and to them they are turn'd off; that little airy praiſe they get from them, is all the reward they muſt expect: *Ye have no reward of my Father which is in Heaven, ver.* 1. We have therefore need to watch our hearts narrowly, that this deſire of vain-glory ſteal not in, and befool us into that miſerable exchange of a vain blaſt of mens breath for thoſe ſubſtantial and eternal joys of Heaven.

Manner of Alms-giving.

5. In the ſecond place we muſt take care of our Alms-giving, in reſpect of the manner; and in that, firſt, we muſt give chearfully; Men uſually value a ſmall thing that is given chearfully and with a good heart, more than a much greater, that is wrung from a Man with grudging and unwillingneſs; and God is of the ſame mind, he loves a chearful giver, 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. which the Apoſtle makes the reaſon of the foregoing exhortation, of not *giving grudgingly, or as of neceſſity:* ver. 6. And ſure 'tis no unreaſonable thing, that is herein required of us, there being no duty that has to humane nature more of pleaſure and delight, unleſs it be where covetouſneſs or cruelty have quite worked out the Man, and put a ravenous beaſt in his ſtead. Is it not a moſt raviſhing pleaſure to him that hath any bowels, to ſee the joy that a ſeaſonable alms brings to a poor wretch? How it revives and puts new ſpirits in him, that was even ſinking? Certainly the moſt ſenſual creature alive knows not how to beſtow his Money on any thing, that ſhall bring him in ſo great a delight, and therefore methinks it ſhould be no hard matter to give not only without grudging, but even with a great deal of alacrity and chearfulneſs, it being the fetching in of pleaſure to our ſelves.

Chearfully.

The fear of impoveriſhing our ſelves by it, vain and impious.

6. There is but one Objection can be made againſt this, and that is, that the danger of impoveriſhing ones ſelf by what one gives, may take off that pleaſure, and make Men either not give at all, or not ſo chearfully. To this I anſwer: That firſt, were this hazard never ſo apparent, yet it being the Command of God that we ſhall thus give, we are yet to obey chearfully, and be as well content to part with our goods in purſuance of this duty, as we are many times called to do upon ſome other. In which caſe Chriſt tells us, *He that forſakes not all that he hath, cannot be his Diſciple.*

7. But ſecondly, this is ſure a vain ſuppoſition, God having particularly promiſed the contrary to the Charitable; that it ſhall bring bleſſings on them, even in theſe outward things. *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*, Prov. 11. 25. *He that giveth to the*

poor ſhall not lack, *Prov.* 28. 27. And many the like Texts there are, ſo that one may truly ſay, this objection is grounded in direct unbelief. The ſhort of it is, we dare not truſt God for this. Giving to the poor is directly the putting our wealth into his hands; *He that giveth to the poor lendeth unto the Lord*, Prov. 19. 17. and that too on ſolemn promiſe of repayment, as it follows in that Verſe, *That which he hath given will he pay him again.* It is amongſt Men thought a great diſparagement, when we refuſe to truſt them; it ſhews we either think them not ſufficient, or not honeſt. How vile an affront is it then to God thus to diſtruſt him? Nay indeed, how horrid blaſphemy, to doubt the ſecurity of that, for which he has thus expreſly paſt his word, who is Lord of all, and therefore cannot be inſufficient, and who is the God of truth, and therefore will not fail to make good his promiſe? Let not then that infidel fear of future want, contract and ſhut up thy bowels from thy poor brother; for though he be never likely to pay thee, yet God becomes his Surety, and enters bond with him, and will moſt aſſuredly pay thee with increaſe. Therefore it is ſo far from being damage to thee, thus to give, that it is thy great advantage. Any man would rather chuſe to put his money in ſome ſure hand, where he may both improve, and be certain of it at his need, than to let it lye unprofitable by him, eſpecially if he be in danger of thieves, or other accidents, by which he may probably loſe it. Now alas! all that we poſſeſs is in minutely danger of loſing; innumerable accidents there are, which may in an inſtant bring a rich man to beggery; he that doubts this, let him but read the ſtory of *Job*, and he will there find an example of it: And therefore what ſo prudent courſe can we take for our wealth, as to put it out of the reach of thoſe accidents, by thus lending it to God, where we may be ſure to find it ready at our greateſt need, and that too with improvement and increaſe? In which reſpect it is that the Apoſtle compares alms to Seed, 2 *Cor.* 9. 10. We know it is the nature of Seed that is ſown, to multiply and increaſe, and ſo do all our acts of mercy, they return not ſingle and naked to us, but bring in their ſheaves with them, a moſt plenteous and bountiful harveſt. God deals not with our Alms, as we too often do with his graces, wrap them up in a napkin, ſo that they ſhall never bring in any advantage to us, but makes us moſt rich returns: and therefore we have all reaſon moſt chearfully, yea, joyfully to ſet to this duty, which we have ſuch invitations to, as well in reſpect of our own intereſts, as our neighbours needs.

Give ſeaſonably.

8. Secondly, We muſt give ſeaſonably: it is true indeed there are ſome ſo poor, that an Alms can never come unſeaſonably, becauſe they always want, yet even to them there may be ſome ſpecial ſeaſons of doing it to their greater advantage; for ſometimes an Alms may not only deliver a poor man from ſome preſent extremity, but by the right timing of it, may ſet him in ſome way of a more comfortable ſubſiſtance afterward. And for the moſt, I preſume it is a good Rule, to diſpenſe what we intend to any, as ſoon as may be, for delays are hurtful oftentimes both to them and our ſelves; firſt, as to them, it is ſure, the longer we delay, the longer they groan under the preſent want, and after we have deſigned them a relief, it is in ſome degree a cruelty to defer beſtowing of it, for ſo long we prolong their ſufferings. You will think him a hard-hearted Phyſician that having a certain cure for a Man in pain, ſhould, when he might preſently apply it, make unneceſſary delays, and ſo keep the poor man ſtill in torture: and the ſame it is here; we want of the due compaſſion, if we can be content our poor brother

ſhould

ſhould have one hour of unneceſſary ſuffering, when we have preſent opportunity of relieving him: Or if he be not in ſuch an extremity of want, yet whatever we intend him for his greater comfort, he loſes ſo much of it, as the time of the delay amounts to. Secondly, in reſpect of our ſelves, 'tis ill to defer; for thereby we give advantage to the temptations either of Satan or our own covetous humour, to diſſwade us from it. Thus it fares too often with many Chriſtian duties; for want of a ſpeedy execution, our purpoſes cool, and never come to act; ſo many reſolve they will repent, but becauſe they ſet not immediately upon it, one delay ſucceeds another, and keeps them from ever doing it at all; and ſo 'tis very apt to fall out in this caſe, eſpecially with men who are of a covetous temper, and therefore they of all others ſhould not truſt themſelves thus to delay.

Prudently.

9. Thirdly, We ſhould take care to give prudently, that is, to give moſt, where it is moſt needed, and in ſuch a manner, as may do the receiver moſt good. Charities do often miſcarry for want of this care, for if we give at all adventures to all that ſeem to want, we may ſometimes give more to thoſe, whoſe ſloth and lewdneſs is the cauſe of their want, than to thoſe who beſt deſerve it, and ſo both encourage the one in their idleneſs, and diſable our ſelves from giving to the other. Yet I doubt not ſuch may be the preſent wants even of the moſt unworthy, that we are to relieve them; but where no ſuch preſſing need is, we ſhall do beſt to chuſe out the fitter objects of Charity, ſuch as are thoſe who either are not able to labour, or elſe have a greater charge than their labour can maintain, and to thoſe our alms ſhould be given alſo in ſuch manner as may be moſt likely to do them good; the manner of which may differ according to the circumſtances of their condition; it may to ſome be beſt perhaps, to give them by little and little, to others the giving it all at once may tend more to their benefit; and ſometimes a ſeaſonable loan may do as well as a gift, and that may be in the power ſometimes of thoſe who are able to give but little: But when we thus lend on Charity, we muſt lend freely without Uſe, and alſo with a purpoſe, that if he ſhould prove unable to pay, we will forgive ſo much of the Principal as his needs require, and our abilities will permit. They want much of this Charity, who clap up poor debtors in priſon, when they know they have nothing to anſwer the debt, which is a great cruelty, to make another miſerable, when nothing is gained to our ſelves by it.

10. Fourthly, We ſhould give liberally, we muſt not be ſtrait-handed in our alms, and give by ſuch pitiful ſcantlings, as will bring almoſt no relief to the receiver, for that is a kind of mockery; 'tis as if one ſhould pretend to feed one that is almoſt famiſhed by giving him a crumb of bread; ſuch Doles as that would be moſt ridiculous, yet I fear 'tis too near the proportion of ſome mens alms; ſuch Men are below thoſe Diſciples we read of, who knew only the Baptiſm of *John*, for 'tis to be obſerved, that *John* Baptiſt, who was but the forerunner of Chriſt, makes it a ſpecial part of his doctrine, that he *that hath two coats ſhould impart to him that hath none*, *Luke* 3. 11. He ſays not, He that hath ſome great Wardrobe, but even he that hath but two coats muſt part with one of them; from whence we may gather, that whatſoever is above (not our vanity, but) our need, ſhould thus be diſpoſed of, when our brethrens neceſſity requires it. But if we look into the firſt time of the Goſpel, we ſhall find Chriſtianity far exceeded this proportion of *John*'s; the Converts aſſigned not a part only, but frankly *gave all to the uſe of the brethren*, *Acts* 4. And though that being upon an extraordinary occaſion, will be no meaſure of our conſtant practice,

practice, yet it may ſhew us how prime and fundamental a part of Chriſtianity, this of Charity is, that at the very firſt founding of the Church, ſuch vaſt degrees of it were practiſed; and if we farther conſider what precepts of love are given us, in the Goſpel, even to the *laying down our lives for the brethren*, 1 *John* 3. 16. we cannot imagine our goods are in Gods account ſo much more precious than our lives, that he would command us to be prodigal of the one, and yet allow us to be ſparing of the other.

11. A multitude of Arguments might be brought to recommend this bounty to all that profeſs Chriſt; I ſhall mention only two, which I find uſed by S. *Paul* to the *Corinthians* on this occaſion. The firſt is the example of Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* Chriſt emptied himſelf of all that glory and greatneſs he enjoyed in Heaven with his Father, and ſubmitted himſelf to a life of much meanneſs and poverty, only to enrich us. And therefore for ſhame, let us not grudge to empty our Coffers, to leſſen ſomewhat of our heaps to relieve his poor members. The ſecond, is the expectation of reward, which will be more or leſs, according to the degrees of our Alms, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. *He that ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly, and he that ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully.* We think him a very improvident Husband-man, that to ſave a little ſeed at preſent, ſows ſo thin, as to ſpoil his crop; and the ſame folly 'twill be in us, if by the ſparingneſs of our alms, we make our ſelves a lank harveſt hereafter, loſe either all, or a great part of thoſe rewards which God hath provided for the liberal Alms-giver. What is the proportion which may be called a liberal giving, I ſhall not undertake to ſet down, there being degrees even in liberality; one may give liberally, and yet another give more liberally than he; beſides, liberality is to be meaſured, not ſo much by what is given, as by the ability of the giver. A man of a mean eſtate may give leſs than one of a great, and yet be the more liberal perſon, becauſe that little may be more out of his, than the greater is out of the others. Thus we ſee Chriſt pronounces the poor Widow to *have given much more to the Treaſury, than all the rich men*, *Luke* 21. 3. not that her two mites were more than their rich gifts, but that it was more for her, ſhe having left nothing behind, whereas they gave out of their abundance what they might eaſily ſpare. Every Man muſt herein judge for himſelf; we ſee the Apoſtle, though he earneſtly preſs the *Corinthians* to bounty, yet preſcribes not to them how much they ſhall give, but leaves that to their own breaſts, 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. *Every man according as he purpoſeth in his heart, ſo let him give.* But let us ſtill remember, that the more we give (provided we do not thereby fail in the ſupport of thoſe, that moſt immediately depend on us) the more acceptable it will be to God, and the more rewardable by him. And to ſecure the performance of the duty of Alms-giving (whatever the proportion be) we may do very well to follow the advice S. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians* in this matter, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. *Upon the firſt day of the week let every one of you lay by him in ſtore as God hath proſpered him.* If Men would do thus, lay by ſomewhat weekly in ſtore for this work of Charity, it were the ſureſt way not to be unprovided of ſomewhat to give, when an occaſion offered it ſelf, and by giving ſo by little and little, the expence would become leſs ſenſible, and ſo be a means to prevent thoſe grudgings and repinings, which are apt to attend Men in greater diſburſements; and ſure this were in other reſpects alſo a very proper courſe; for when a Tradeſman caſts up his weekly account, and ſees what his gains

have

have been, 'tis of all others the moſt ſeaſonable time to offer this tribute to God out of what he hath by His bleſſing gained. If any will ſay they cannot ſo well weekly reckon their gains, as by longer ſpaces of time, I ſhall not contend with them for that preciſe time, let it be done monthly or quarterly, ſo it be done. But that ſomewhat ſhould ſtill be laid by in bank for theſe uſes, rather than left looſe to our ſudden Charities, is ſure very expedient; and I doubt not, whoever will make trial of it, will upon experience acknowledge it to be ſo.

Charity in reſpect of the Credit.

12. The fourth exerciſe of our Charity is towards the credit of our Neighbour: And of this we may have many occaſions, ſometimes towards the innocent, and ſometimes alſo towards the guilty. If one whom we know to be an innocent perſon, be ſlandered, and traduced, Charity binds us to do what we may for the declaring his innocency, and delivering him from that falſe imputation, and that not only by witneſſing when we are called to it, but by a voluntary offering our teſtimony on his behalf, or if the accuſation be not before a Court of Juſtice, and ſo there be no place for that our more ſolemn teſtimony, but that it be only a ſlander toſt from one to another, yet even there we are to do what we can to clear him, by taking all occaſions publickly to declare what we know of his innocency. But even to the guilty there is ſome Charity of this kind to be performed, ſometimes by concealing the fault, if it be ſuch that no other part of Charity to others make it neceſſary to diſcover it, or it be not ſo notorious, as that it will be ſure to betray it ſelf. The wounds of Reputation are of all others the moſt incurable, and therefore it may well become Chriſtian Charity to prevent them, even where they have been deſerved; and perhaps ſuch a tenderneſs in hiding the fault may ſooner bring the offender to Repentance, if it be ſeconded (as it ought to be) with all earneſtneſs of private admonition: But if the fault be ſuch, that it be not to be concealed, yet ſtill there may be place for this Charity, in extenuating and leſſening it, as far as the circumſtances will bear: As if it were done ſuddenly and raſhly, Charity will allow ſome abatement of the Cenſure, which would belong to a deſigned and deliberate Act; and ſo proportionably in other circumſtances. But the moſt frequent exerciſes of this Charity happen toward thoſe, of whoſe either innocency or guilt we have no knowledge, but are by ſome doubtful actions brought under ſuſpicion: And here we muſt remember, that it is the property of love, not to think evil, to judge the beſt; and therefore we are both to abſtain from uncharitable concluſions of them our ſelves, and as much as lies in us, to keep others from them alſo, and ſo endeavour to preſerve the credit of our Neighbour; which is oftentimes as much ſhaken by unjuſt ſuſpicions, as it would be by the trueſt accuſation. To theſe caſes, I ſuppoſe, belongs that precept of Chriſt, *Matt.* 7. 1. *Judge not*; and when we conſider how that is backt in the following words, *That ye be not judged*, we ſhall have cauſe to believe it no ſuch light matter as the world ſeems to account it; our unmerciful judging of others will be paid home to us, in the ſtrict and ſevere Judgment of God.

The acts of Charity in ſome reſpects acts of Juſtice alſo.

13. I have now gone through this Active Charity, as it relates to the four ſeveral capacities of our brethren, many of the particulars whereof were before briefly mentioned, when we ſpake of Juſtice. If any think it improper, that the ſame acts ſhould be made part of Juſtice and Charity too, I ſhall deſire them to conſider, that Charity being by Chriſts command become a debt to our brethren, all the parts of it may in that reſpect be ranked under the head of Juſtice, ſince 'tis ſure, paying of debts is a

part

part of that: Yet becauſe in our common uſe we do diſtinguiſh between the offices of Juſtice and Charity, I have choſe to enlarge on them in particular reference to Charity. But I deſire it may ſtill be remembred, that whatſoever is under precept, is ſo much a due from us, that we ſin not only againſt Charity, but Juſtice too, if we neglect it; which deſerves to be conſidered, the more to ſtir up our care to the performance, and the rather, becauſe there ſeems to be a common error in this point. Men look upon their Acts of mercy, as things purely voluntary, that they have no obligation to; and the effect of it is this, that they are apt to think very highly of themſelves, when they have performed any, though never ſo mean, but never blame themſelves, though they omit all: Which is a very dangerous, but withal a very natural fruit of the former perſwaſion. If there be any Charities, wherein juſtice is not concerned, they are thoſe which for the height and degrees of them are not made matter of ſtrict Duty, that is, are not in thoſe degrees commanded by God: And even after theſe, 'twill be very reaſonable for us to labour: But that cannot be done without taking the lower and neceſſary degrees in our way; and therefore let our firſt care be for them.

The great rule of Charity. 14. To help us wherein there will be no better means, than to keep before our eyes that grand rule of *Loving our Neighbours as our ſelves:* This the Apoſtle makes the ſum of our whole duty to our Neighbours, *Rom.* 13. 9. Let this therefore be the ſtandard, whereby to meaſure all thy actions, which relate to others; whenever any neceſſity of thy Neighbours preſents it ſelf to thee, ask thy ſelf, whether, if thou wert in the like caſe, thy love to thy ſelf would not make thee induſtrious for relief, and then reſolve thy love to thy Neighbour muſt have the ſame effect for him. This is that Royal Law, as S. *James* calls it, *James* 2. 8. which all that profeſs themſelves ſubjects to Chriſt, muſt be ruled by; and whoſoever is ſo, will not fail of performing all charities to others, becauſe 'tis ſure he would upon the like occaſions have all ſuch performed to himſelf. There is none but wiſhes to have his good name defended, his poverty reliev'd, his bodily ſuffering ſuccoured, only it may be ſaid, that in the ſpiritual wants, there are ſome ſo careleſs of themſelves, that they wiſh no ſupply, they deſire no reproofs, no inſtructions, nay, are angry when they are given them; it may therefore ſeem that ſuch Men are not by virtue of this rule tied to thoſe ſorts of Charities. To this I anſwer, That the love of our ſelves, which is here ſet as the meaſure of that to our Neighbour, is to be underſtood to be that reaſonable love, which Men ought to have, and therefore, though a Man fail of that due love he ows himſelf, yet his Neighbour hath not thereby forfeited his right, he has ſtill a claim to ſuch a degree of our love, as is anſwerable to that, which in right we ſhould bear to our ſelves; and ſuch I am ſure is this care of our ſpiritual eſtate, and therefore 'tis not our deſpiſing our own Souls, that will abſolve us from Charity to other Mens: Yet I ſhall not much preſs this duty in ſuch Men, it being neither likely that they will be perſwaded to it, or do any good by it, their ill example will overwhelm all their good exhortations, and make them unfruitful.

Peace-making. 15. There is yet one Act of Charity behind, which does not properly fall under any one of the former heads, and yet may relate to them all, and that is, the making peace and amity among others: By doing whereof we may much benefit both the Souls, Bodies, Goods and Credit of our brethren; for all theſe are in danger by ſtrife and contention. The reconciling of enemies is a moſt bleſſed work, and brings a bleſſing on the Actors:

Actors: We have Christs word for it, *Blessed are the Peace-makers*, *Mat.* 5. 9. and therefore we may be encourag'd diligently to lay hold of all opportunities of doing this office of Charity, to use all our Art and endeavour to take up all grudges and quarrels we discern among others; neither must we only labour to restore peace where it is lost, but to preserve it where it is: First, generally, by striving to beget in the hearts of all we converse with, a true value of that most precious Jewel, Peace; Secondly, particularly, by a timely prevention of those jars and unkindnesses, we see likely to fall out. It may many times be in the power of a discreet friend or neighbour, to cure those mistakes and misapprehensions, which are the first beginnings of quarrels and contentions; and it will be both more easie and more profitable, thus to prevent, than pacifie strifes. 'Tis sure 'tis more easie, for when a quarrel is once broken out, 'tis like a violent flame, which cannot so soon be quencht, as it might have been, whilest it was but a smothering fire. And then 'tis also more profitable, for it prevents many sins, which in the progress of an open contention, are almost sure to be committed. *Solomon* says, *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, *Pro.* 10. 19. which cannot more truly be said of any sorts of words, than those that pass in anger, and then, though the quarrel be afterwards composed, yet those sins will still remain on their account; and therefore it is a great Charity to prevent them.

16. But to fit a Man for this so excellant an Office of Peace-making, 'tis necessary that he be first remarkably peaceable himself; for with what face canst thou perswade others to that which thou wilt not perform thy self? or how canst thou expect thy perswasions should work? 'Twill be a ready reply in every Mans mouth, *Thou Hypocrite cast out first the beam out of thine own eye*, *Mat.* 7. 5. and therefore be sure thou qualifie thy self for the work. There is one point of Peaceableness which seems to be little regarded among Men, and that is in the Case of legal trespasses; Men think it nothing to go to Law about every petty trifle, and as long as they have but Law on their side never think they are to blame: but sure had we that true peaceableness of spirit which we ought, we should be unwilling for such slight matters to trouble and disquiet our Neighbours. Not that all going to Law is utterly unchristian, but such kind of Suits especially, as are upon contentiousness, and stoutness of humour, to defend such an inconsiderable right, as the parting with will do us little or no harm, or which is yet worse, to avenge such a trespass. And even in great matters, he that shall part with somewhat of his Right for love of Peace, does surely the most Christianly, and most agreeably to the advice of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 6. 7. *Rather to take wrong, and suffer our selves to be defrauded.* But if the damage be so unsupportable, that it is necessary for us to go to Law, yet even then we must take care of preserving Peace: first by carrying still a friendly and Christian temper towards the party, not suffering our hearts to be at all estranged from him; secondly, by being willing to yield to any reasonable terms of agreement whenever they shall be offered; and truly if we carry not this temper of mind in our suits, I see not how they can be reconcileable with that peaceableness so strictly required of all Christians. Let those consider this who make it their pleasure themselves to disquiet their Neighbour, or their trade to stir up others to do it. This tender regard of Peace both in our selves and others, is absolutely necessary to be entertained of all those, who own themselves to be the servants of him, whose title it is to be the *Prince of Peace*, *Isa.* 9. 6.

He that undertakes it, must be peaceable himself.

Of going to Law.

This Charity of the actions must reach to enemies.

17. All that remains to be toucht on concerning this Charity of the Actions, is the extent of it, which muſt be as large as the former of the affections, even to the taking in, not only ſtrangers, and thoſe of no relation to us, but even of our bittereſt enemies. I have already ſpoken ſo much of the Obligation we are under to forgive them, that I ſhall not here ſay any thing of that, but that being ſuppoſed a Duty, 'twill ſure then appear no unreaſonable thing to proceed one ſtep further, by doing them good turns; for when we have once forgiven them, we can then no longer account them enemies, and ſo 'twill be no hard matter even to fleſh and bloud to do all kind things to them. And indeed this is the way, by which we muſt try the ſincerity of our forgiveneſs. 'Tis eaſie to ſay, I forgive ſuch a Man, but if when an opportunity of doing him good is offered, thou declineſt it, 'tis apparent there yet lurks the old malice in thy heart; where there is a through forgiveneſs, there will be as great a readineſs to benefit an enemy as a friend, nay, perhaps in ſome reſpects a greater, a true charitable perſon looking upon it as an eſpecial prize, when he has an opportunity of evidencing the truth of his reconciliation, and obeying the precept of his Saviour, by *doing good to them that hate him*, *Mat.* 5. 44. Let us therefore reſolve that all actions of kindneſs are to be performed to our enemies, for which we have not only the command, but alſo the example of Chriſt, who had not only ſome inward relentings towards us his obſtinate and moſt provoking enemies, but ſhewed it in acts, and thoſe no cheap, or eaſie ones, but ſuch as coſt him his deareſt bloud. And ſurely we can never pretend to be either obeyers of his Command, or followers of his Example, if we grudge to teſtifie our loves to our Enemies, by thoſe ſo much cheaper ways *of feeding them in hunger*, and the like; recommended to us by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 20. But if we could perform theſe acts of kindneſs to enemies in ſuch manner as might draw them from their enmity, and win them to Peace, the Charity would be doubled; And this we ſhould aim at, for that we ſee the Apoſtle ſets as the end of the forementioned acts of feeding, *&c.* that we may *heap coals of fire on their heads*, not coals to burn, but to melt them into all love and tenderneſs towards us; and this were indeed the moſt compleat way of imitating Chriſts example, who in all he did and ſuffered for us, deſigned the reconciling of us to himſelf.

Self-love an hindrance to this Charity.

18. I have now ſhewed you the ſeveral parts of our duty to our Neighbour, towards the performance whereof I know nothing more neceſſary, than the turning out of our hearts that ſelf-love which ſo often poſſeſſes them, and that ſo wholly, that it leaves no room for Charity, nay, nor Juſtice neither to our Neighbour. By this ſelf-love I mean not that true love of our ſelves, which is the love and care of our Souls (for that would certainly help, not hinder us in this duty) but I mean that immoderate love of our own worldly intereſts and advantages, which is apparently the root of all both injuſtice and uncharitableneſs towards others. We find this ſin of ſelf-love ſet by the Apoſtle in the head of a whole troop of ſins, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. as if it were ſome principal officer in Satans camp; and certainly, not without reaſon, for it never goes without an accurſed train of many other ſins, which like the Dragons tail, *Rev.* 12. 4. ſweeps away all care of duty to others. We are by it made ſo vehement and intent upon the pleaſing our ſelves, that we have no regard to any body elſe, contrary to the direction of S. *Paul*, *Rom.* 15. 2. which is, not to pleaſe our ſelves, *But every man to pleaſe his Neighbour for his good to edification*; which he backs with the example of Chriſt, ver. 3. *For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf:* If therefore we have any ſincere deſire to have this vertue of Charity rooted in our hearts, we muſt

must be careful to weed out this sin of self-love, for 'tis impossible they can prosper together.

19. But when we have removed this hindrance, we must remember that this, as all other graces, proceeds not from our selves, it is the gift of God, and therefore we must earnestly pray to him to work it in us, to send his holy Spirit, which once appeared in the form of a Dove, a meek and gall-less creature, to frame our hearts to the same temper, and enable us rightly to perform this duty. *Prayer a means to procure it.*

20. I Have now past through those several Branches I at first proposed, and shewed you what is our Duty to God, our selves, and our Neighbour: Of which I may say as it is, *Luke* 10. 28. *This do and thou shalt live.* And surely 'tis no impossible task to perform this in such a measure, as God will graciously accept, that is, in Sincerity, though not in Perfection, for God is not that austere Master, *Luke* 19. 20. *That reaps where he has not sown,* he requires nothing of us, which he is not ready by his Grace to enable us to perform, if we be not wanting to our selves, either in asking it by Prayer, or in using it by Diligence. And as it is not impossible, so neither is it such a sad melancholy task, as Men are apt to think it. 'Tis a special policy of Satans, to do as the spies did, *Numb.* 23, 28. *Bring up an ill report upon this good Land,* this state of Christian life, thereby to discourage us from entring into it, to fright us with I know not what Gyants we shall meet with; but let us not thus be cheated, let us but take the courage to try, and we shall indeed find it a *Canaan, a Land flowing with milk and honey:* God is not in this respect to his people *a wilderness, a Land of Darkness, Jer.* 2. 31. His Service does not bereave Men of any true joy, but helps them to a great deal: Christs yoke is an easie, nay, a pleasant yoke, his burden a light, yea, a gracious burden. There is in the practice of Christian Duties a great deal of present pleasure, and if we feel it not, it is because of the resistance our vicious and sinful customes make, which by the contention raises an uneasiness. But then first, that is to be charged only on our selves, for having got those ill customs, and thereby made that hard to us, which in it self is most pleasant, the Duties are not to be accused for it. And then secondly, even there the pleasure of subduing those ill habits, overcoming those corrupt customs is such, as hugely outweigheth all the trouble of the combate. *Christian duties both possible and pleasant.*

21. But it will perhaps be said, that some parts of piety are of such a nature, as will be very apt to expose us to persecutions and sufferings in the world, and that those are not joyous but grievous. *Even when they expose us to outward sufferings.*

I answer, that even in those there is matter of joy. We see the Apostles thought it so, *They rejoyced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christs name,* Acts 4. 41. and S. *Peter* tells us, *That if any suffer as a Christian, he is to glorifie God for it,* 1 *Pet.* 4. 16. There is such a force and vertue in the testimony of a good Conscience, as is able to change the greatest suffering into the greatest triumph, and that testimony we can never have more clear and lively, than when we suffer for righteousness sake; so that you see Christianity is very amiable even in its saddest dress, the inward comforts of it do far surpass all the outward tribulations that attend it, and that even in the instant while we are in the state of warfare upon earth. But then if we look forward to the crown of our victories, those eternal rewards in Heaven, we can never think those tasks sad, though we had nothing at present to sweeten them, that have such recompences await them at the end; were our labours never so heavy, we could have no cause to faint

under them. Let us therefore when ever we meet with any diſcouragements in our courſe, fix our eye on this rich prize, and then *run with patience the race which is ſet before us, Heb.* 12. 2 follow the Captain of our ſalvation through the greateſt ſufferings, yea, even through the ſame red ſea of bloud which he hath waded, whenever our Obedience to him ſhall require it; for though our fidelity to him ſhould bring us to death it ſelf, we are ſure to be no loſers by it, for to ſuch he hath promiſed a crown of life, the very expectation whereof is able to keep a Chriſtian more chearful in his fetters and dungeon, than a worldling can be in the midſt of his greateſt proſperities.

The danger of delaying our turning to God.

22. All that remains for me farther to add, is earneſtly to intreat and beſeech the Reader, that without delay he put himſelf into this ſo pleaſant and gainful a courſe, by ſetting ſincerely to the practice of all thoſe things, which either by this Book, or by any other means he diſcerns to be his Duty: and the further he hath formerly gone out of his way, the more haſte it concerns him to make to get into it, and to uſe the more diligence in walking in it. He that hath a long Journey to go, and finds he hath loſt a great part of his day in a wrong way, will not need much intreaty, either to turn into the right, or to quicken his pace in it. And this is the caſe of all thoſe that have lived in any courſe of ſin, they are in a wrong road, which will never bring them to the place they aim at: nay, which will certainly bring them to the place they moſt fear and abhor; much of their day is ſpent, how much will be left to finiſh their Journey in, none knows, perhaps the next hour, the next minute, the night of death may overtake them; what a madneſs is it then for them to defer one moment to turn out of that Path which leads to certain deſtruction, and to put themſelves in that, which will bring them to bliſs and glory? Yet ſo are Men bewitched, and enchanted with the deceitfulneſs of ſin, that no intreaty, no perſwaſion can prevail with them, to make this ſo reaſonable, ſo neceſſary a change: not but that they acknowledge it needful to be done, but they are unwilling to do it yet; they would enjoy all the pleaſures of ſin as long as they live, and then they hope at their death, or ſome little time before it, to do all the buſineſs of their Souls. But, alas! Heaven is too high to be thus jumpt into, the way to it is a long and leiſurely aſcent, which requires time to walk. The hazards of ſuch deferring are more largely ſpoken of in the Diſcourſe of Repentance: I ſhall not here repeat them, but deſire the Reader ſeriouſly to lay them to heart, and then ſurely he will think it ſeaſonable Counſel that is given by the Wiſe man, *Eccluſ.* 5. 7. *Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day.*

FINIS.

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS FOR SEVERAL OCCASIONS, ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY.

Christian Reader,

I *Have, for the help of thy Devotions, set down some* FORMS *of* PRIVATE PRAYER, *upon* several occasions: *If it be thought an omission that there are none for Families, I must answer for my self, that it was not from any opinion, that God is not as well to be worshipp'd in the Family as the Closet; but because the Providence of God and the Church hath already furnished thee for that purpose, infinitely beyond what my utmost care could do. I mean the* PUBLICK LITURGY *or* COMMON-PRAYER, *which for all publick addresses to God (and such are Family-prayers) are so excellent and useful, that we may say of it, as* David *did of* Goliah's *sword,* 1 *Sam.* 21. 9. There is none like it.

DIRECTIONS *for the* MORNING.

As soon as ever thou awakest in the morning, lift up thy heart to God in this or the like short Prayer.

LORD, as thou hast awaked my Body from sleep, so by thy Grace awaken my Soul from sin; and make me so to walk before thee this day, and all the rest of my life, that when the last Trumpet shall awake me out of my Grave, I may rise to the life immortal, through Jesus Christ.

When thou hast thus begun, suffer not (without some urgent necessity) any worldly thoughts to fill thy mind, till thou hast also paid thy more solemn Devotions to Almighty God, and therefore during the time thou art dressing thy self, (which should be no longer than common decency requires) exercise thy mind in some spiritual thoughts: As for example, consider to what Temptations *thy* business *or* company *that day are most like to lay thee open, and arm thy self with Resolutions against them; or again, consider what* occasions *of* doing service *to God, or good to thy Neighbour are that day most likely to present themselves, and resolve to embrace them; and also contrive how thou mayest improve them to the uttermost. But especially it will be fit for thee to examine whether there have any sin escaped thee since thy last nights examination. If after these considerations any further leisure remain, thou mayest profitably employ it in meditating on the general* Resurrection (*whereof our rising from our beds is a representation*) *and of that dreadful* Judgment *which shall follow it, and then think*

with

with thy self in what preparation thou art for it, and resolve to husband carefully every minute of thy time towards the fitting thee for that great account. As soon as thou art ready, retire to some private place, and there offer up to God thy morning Sacrifice of Praise and Prayer.

Prayers for the Morning.

At thy first kneeling down, say,

O Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner.

LORD, I know not what to pray for as I ought, O let thy Spirit help my infirmities, and enable me to offer up a spiritual Sacrifice acceptable to thee by Jesus Christ.

A Thanksgiving.

O Gracious Lord, whose mercies endure for ever, I thy unworthy servant who have so deeply tasted of them, desire to render thee the tribute of my humblest praises for them. In thee, O Lord, I live and move and have my being: Thou first madest me to be, and then that I might not be miserable but happy, thou sentest thy Son out of thy bosom to Redeem me from the power of my sins by his Grace, and from the punishment of them by his Bloud, and by both to bring me to his glory. Thou hast by thy mercy caused me to be born within thy peculiar fold, the Christian Church, where I was early consecrated to thee in Baptism, and have been partaker of all those spiritual helps which might aid me to perform that Vow I there made to thee; and when by my own wilfulness or negligence, I have failed to do it, yet thou in thy manifold mercies hast not forsaken me, but hast graciously invited me to repentance, afforded me all means both outward and inward for it, and with much patience hast attended and not cut me off in the acts of those many damning sins I have committed, as I have most justly deserved. It is, O Lord, thy Restraining grace alone by which I have been kept back from any the greatest sins, and it is thy Inciting and Assisting grace alone, by which I have been enabled to do any the least good; therefore not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy Name be the praises. For these and all other thy spiritual blessings, my Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and all that is within me praise his holy Name. I likewise praise thee for those many outward Blessings I enjoy, as health, friends, food and raiment, the comforts as well as the necessaries of this life, for those continual Protections of thy hand, by which I and mine are kept from dangers, and those gracious Deliverances thou hast often afforded out of such as have befallen me, and for that mercy of thine whereby thou hast sweetned and allayed those troubles thou hast not seen fit wholly to remove: For thy particular preservation of me this night, and all other thy goodness towards me. Lord, grant that I may render thee not only the fruit of my lips, but the obedience of my life; that so these blessings here may be an earnest of those richer blessings thou hast prepared for those that love thee, and that for his sake, whom thou hast made the Author of Eternal Salvation to all that obey him, even Jesus Christ.

A Confeſſion.

O Righteous Lord, who hateſt iniquity, I thy ſinful creature caſt my ſelf at thy feet, acknowledging that I moſt juſtly deſerve to be utterly abhorred and forſaken by thee; for I have drunk iniquity like water, gone on in a continued courſe of ſin and rebellion againſt thee, daily committing thoſe things thou forbiddeſt, and leaving undone thoſe things thou commandeſt; mine heart, which ſhould be an habitation for thy ſpirit, is become a cage of unclean birds, of foul and diſordered affections; and out of this abundance of the heart my mouth ſpeaketh, my hands act, ſo that in thought, word and deed, I continually tranſgreſs againſt thee. [*Here mention the greateſt of thy ſins.*] Nay, O Lord, I have deſpiſed that goodneſs of thine which ſhould lead me to Repentance, hardning my heart againſt all thoſe means thou haſt uſed for my amendment. And now, Lord, what can I expect from thee but judgment and fiery indignation, that is indeed the due reward of my ſins? But, O Lord, there is mercy with thee that thou mayeſt be feared. O fit me for that mercy by giving me a deep and hearty Repentance, and then according to thy Goodneſs let thine anger and thy wrath be turned away from me; look upon me in thy Son, my bleſſed Saviour, and for the merit of his ſufferings pardon all my ſins: And, Lord, I beſeech thee, by the power of thy grace ſo to renew and purifie my heart, that I may become a new creature, utterly forſaking every evil way, and living in conſtant, ſincere, univerſal obedience to thee all the reſt of my days, that behaving my ſelf as a good and faithful ſervant, I may by thy mercy at the laſt be received into the joy of my Lord. Grant this for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.

A Prayer for Grace.

O Moſt gracious God from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, I wretched creature that am not able of my ſelf ſo much as to think a good thought, beſeech thee to work in me both to Will and Do according to thy good pleaſure. Inlighten my mind that I may know thee, and let me not be barren or unfruitful in that knowledge; Lord work in my heart a true Faith, a purifying Hope, and an unfeigned Love towards thee; give me a full Truſt on thee, Zeal for thee, Reverence of all things that relate to thee; make me Fearful to offend Thee, Thankful for thy mercies, Humble under thy corrections, Devout in thy Service, Sorrowful for my ſins; and grant that in all things I may behave my ſelf ſo, as befits a creature to his Creator, a ſervant to his Lord; enable me likewiſe to perform that Duty I owe to my ſelf; give me that Meekneſs, Humility, and Contentedneſs whereby I may always poſſeſs my Soul in Patience and Thankfulneſs; make me diligent in all my duties, watchful againſt all temptations, perfectly pure and Temperate, and ſo moderate in my moſt lawful enjoyments, that they may never become a ſnare to me; make me alſo, O Lord, to be ſo affected towards my Neighbour, that I never tranſgreſs that royal Law of thine, of Loving him as my ſelf, grant me exactly to perform all parts of Juſtice, yielding to all whatſoever by any kind of Right becomes their due, and give me ſuch bowels of mercy and compaſſion, that I may never fail to do all acts of Charity to all men, whether friends or enemies, according to thy command and example. Finally, I beſeech thee, O Lord, to ſanctifie me throughout, that my whole ſpirit and ſoul and body may be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt be all honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

Interceſſion.

Interceſſion.

O Bleſſed Lord, whoſe mercy is over all thy works, I beſeech thee to have mercy upon all men, and grant that the precious ranſom which was paid by thy Son for all, may be effectual to the ſaving of all. Give thy inlightning Grace to thoſe that are in darkneſs, and thy converting grace to thoſe that are in ſin; look with thy tendereſt compaſſions upon the Univerſal Church. O be favourable and gracious unto *Sion*, build thou the walls of *Jeruſalem:* Unite all thoſe that profeſs thy Name to thee, by purity, and holineſs; and to each other by brotherly love. Have mercy on this deſolate Church, and ſinful Nation; thou haſt moved the Land and divided it, heal the ſores thereof, for it ſhaketh; make us ſo truly to repent of thoſe ſins which have provoked thy Judgments, that thou alſo mayeſt turn, and repent, and leave a bleſſing behind thee. Bleſs thoſe whom thou haſt appointed our Governours, whether in Church or State: So rule their hearts, and ſtrengthen their hands, that they may neither want will nor power to puniſh wickedneſs and vice, and to maintain Gods true Religion and Vertue. Have pity, O Lord, on all that are in affliction; be a Father to the Fatherleſs, and plead the cauſe of the Widow, comfort the feeble-minded, ſupport the weak, heal the ſick, relieve the needy, defend the oppreſſed, and adminiſter to every one according to their ſeveral neceſſities; let thy bleſſings reſt upon all that are near and dear to me, and grant them whatſoever thou ſeeſt neceſſary either to their Bodies or their Souls. [*Here name thy neareſt Relations.*] Reward all thoſe that have done me good, and pardon all thoſe that have done or wiſht me evil, and work in them and me all that good which may make us acceptable in thy ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Preſervation.

O Merciful God, by whoſe bounty alone it is, that I have this day added to my life, I beſeech thee ſo to guide me in it by thy Grace, that I may do nothing which may diſhonour thee, or wound my own Soul, but that I may diligently apply my ſelf to do all ſuch good works, as thou haſt prepared for me to walk in; and, Lord, I beſeech thee, give thy Angels charge over me, to keep me in all my ways, that no evil happen unto me, nor any plague come nigh my dwelling, but that I and mine may be ſafe under thy gracious protection, through Jeſus Chriſt.

O Lord, pardon the wandrings and coldneſs of theſe petitions, and deal with me, not according either to my prayers or deſerts, but according to my needs and thine own rich mercies in Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe bleſſed name and words, I conclude theſe my imperfect prayers; ſaying, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

Directions for Night.

AT NIGHT, when it draws towards the time of reſt, bethink thy ſelf how thou haſt paſſed the day; examine thine own heart what ſin either of thought, word, or deed thou haſt committed, what opportunity of doing good thou haſt omitted, and whatſoever thou findeſt to accuſe thy ſelf of, confeſs humbly and penitently to God, renew thy purpoſes and reſolutions of amendment, and beg his pardon in Chriſt, and this not ſlightly, and only as of courſe, but with all devout earneſtneſs and heartineſs as thou wouldeſt do, if thou wert ſure thy death were as near approaching as thy ſleep, which for ought thou knoweſt may be ſo indeed, and

therefore

therefore thou ſhouldeſt no more venture to ſleep unreconciled to God, than thou wouldeſt dare to die ſo. In the next place conſider what ſpecial and extraordinary mercies thou haſt that day received, as if thou haſt had any great deliverance, either in thy inward man, from ſome dangerous temptations, or in thy outward, from any great and apparent danger, and offer to God thy hearty and devout praiſe for the ſame; or if nothing extraordinary have ſo hapned, and thou haſt been kept even from the approach of danger, thou haſt not the leſs, but the greater cauſe to magniſie God, who hath by his protection ſo guarded thee, that not ſo much as the fear of evil hath aſſaulted thee. And therefore omit not to pay him the tribute of humble thankfulneſs, as well for his uſual and daily preſervations, as his more extraordinary deliverances. And above all endeavour ſtill by the conſideration of his mercies to have thy heart the more cloſely knit to him, remembring that every favour received from him is a new engagement upon thee to love and obey him.

Prayers for Night.

O Holy, bleſſed and glorious Trinity, three Perſons and one God, have mercy upon me a miſerable ſinner.

Lord, I know not what to pray for as I ought, O let thy Spirit help my infirmities, and enable me to offer up a ſpiritual Sacrifice, acceptable unto thee by Jeſus Chriſt.

A Confeſſion.

O MOST Holy Lord God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, how ſhall I, abominable wretch, dare to appear before thee, who am nothing but pollution? I am defiled in my very nature, having a backwardneſs to all good, and a readineſs to all evil; but I have defiled my ſelf yet much worſe by my own actual ſins and wicked cuſtoms: I have tranſgreſt my duty to Thee, my Neighbour, and my Self, and that both in thought, in word, and in deed, by doing thoſe things which thou haſt expreſly forbidden, and by neglecting to do thoſe things thou haſt commanded me. And this not only through ignorance and frailty, but knowingly and wilfully, againſt the motions of thy Spirit, and the checks of my own conſcience to the contrary. And to make all theſe out of meaſure ſinful, I have gone on in a daily courſe of repeating theſe provocations againſt thee, notwithſtanding all thy calls to, and my own purpoſes and vows of amendment; yea, this very day I have not ceaſed to add new ſins to all my former guilts. [*Here name the particulars.*] And now, O Lord, what ſhall I ſay, or how ſhall I open my mouth, ſeeing I have done theſe things? I know that the wages of theſe ſins is death; but O thou who willeſt not the death of a ſinner, have mercy upon me; work in me, I beſeech thee, a ſincere contrition, and a perfect hatred of my ſins: And let me not daily confeſs, and yet as daily renew them: But Grant, O Lord, that from this inſtant I may give a bill of Divorce to all my moſt beloved luſts, and then be thou pleaſed to marry me to thy ſelf in truth, in righteouſneſs and holineſs. And for all my paſt ſins, O Lord, receive a reconciliation; accept of that ranſom thy bleſſed Son hath paid for me, and for his ſake whom thou haſt ſet forth as a propitiation, pardon all my offences, and receive me to thy favour. And when thou haſt thus ſpoken peace to my Soul, Lord keep me that I turn not any more to folly, but ſo eſtabliſh me with thy Grace, that no temptation of the World, the Devil, or my own fleſh may ever draw me to offend thee, that being made free from ſin, and becoming

coming a ſervant unto God, I may have my fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A Thanksgiving.

O Thou Father of Mercies, who art kind even to the unthankful, I acknowledge my ſelf to have abundantly experimented that gracious property of thine; for notwithſtanding my daily provocations againſt thee, thou ſtill heapeſt mercy and loving kindneſs upon me. All my contempts and deſpiſings of thy ſpiritual favours have not yet made thee withdraw them, but in the riches of thy goodneſs and long-ſuffering thou ſtill continueſt to me the offers of grace and life in thy Son. And all my abuſes of thy temporal bleſſings thou haſt not puniſhed with an utter deprivation of them, but art ſtill pleaſed to afford me a liberal portion of them. The ſins of this day thou haſt not repayed, as juſtly thou might'ſt, by ſweeping me away with a ſwift deſtruction, but haſt ſpared and preſerved me according to the greatneſs of thy mercy. [*Here mention the particular mercies of that day.*] What ſhall I render unto the Lord, for all theſe benefits he hath done unto me? Lord, let this goodneſs of thine lead me to repentance, and grant that I may not only offer thee thanks and praiſe, but may alſo order my converſation aright, that ſo I may at the laſt ſee the ſalvation of God, through Jeſus Chriſt.

Here uſe the Prayer for Grace, and that of Interceſſion appointed for the Morning.

For Preſervation.

O Bleſſed Lord, the Keeper of *Iſrael*, that neither ſlumbereſt nor ſleepeſt, be pleaſed in thy mercy to watch over me this night; keep me by thy grace from all works of darkneſs, and defend me by thy power from all dangers, grant me moderate and refreſhing ſleep, ſuch as may fit me for the duties of the day following. And, Lord, make me ever mindful of that time when I ſhall lye down in the duſt; and becauſe I know neither the day nor the hour of my Maſters coming, grant me grace that I may be always ready, that I may never live in ſuch a ſtate as I ſhall fear to die in; but that whether I live, I may live unto the Lord, or whether I die, I may die unto the Lord, ſo that living and dying I may be thine, through Jeſus Chriſt.

Uſe the ſame concluding Prayer as in the Morning.

AS thou art putting off thy clothes, think with thy ſelf that the time approaches that thou muſt put off thy body alſo, and then thy Soul muſt appear naked before Gods Judgment Seat; *and therefore thou hadſt need be careful to make it ſo clean and pure by repentance and holineſs, that he who will not look on iniquity may graciouſly behold and accept it.*

Let thy Bed put thee in mind of thy Grave, and when thou lyeſt down, ſay,

O Bleſſed Saviour, who by thy precious death and burial didſt take away the ſting of death and the power of the grave, grant me the joyful fruits of that thy victory, and be thou to me in life and death advantage.

I will lay me down in peace, and take my reſt; for it is thou, Lord, only that makeſt me dwell in ſafety.

Into thy hands I commend my ſpirit; for thou haſt redeemed it, O Lord, thou God of truth.

IN the ANCIENT CHURCH *there were beſides Morning and Night, four other times every day, which were called* HOURS OF PRAYER, *and the zeal of thoſe firſt Chriſtians was ſuch, as made them conſtantly obſerved. It would be thought too great a ſtrictneſs now in this lukewarm Age to enjoyn the like frequency: Yet I cannot but mention the example, and ſay, that for thoſe who are not by very neceſſary buſineſs prevented, it will be but reaſonable to imitate it, and make up in publick and private thoſe* FOUR TIMES *of* PRAYER, *beſides the* OFFICES *already ſet down for* MORNING *and* NIGHT, *and that none may be to ſeek how to exerciſe their devotions at theſe times, I have added divers* COLLECTS *for ſeveral Graces, whereof every man may uſe at each ſuch time of prayer ſo many as his zeal and leiſure ſhall point out to him, adding, if he pleaſe, one of the Confeſſions appointed for morning and night, and never omitting the* LORDS PRAYER.

But if any mans ſtate of life be really ſo buſie, as will not allow him time for ſo long and ſolemn devotions; yet certainly there is no man ſo overlaid with buſineſs, but that he may find leiſure oftentimes in a day to ſay the LORDS PRAYER *alone: And therefore let him uſe that, if he cannot more. But becauſe it is the Character of a Chriſtian,* Phil. 3. 20. That he hath his converſation in Heaven, *it is very fit that beſides theſe ſet times of Prayer, he ſhould divers times in a day by ſhort and ſudden* EJACULATIONS *dart up his Soul thither. And for this ſort of devotion no man can want leiſure, for it may be performed in the midſt of buſineſs; the Artificer at his work, the Husbandman at his plough may practiſe it. Now as he cannot want time, ſo that he may not want matter for it, I have thought it not unuſeful out of that rich ſtore-houſe, the BOOK of PSALMS, to furniſh him with ſome Texts, which may very fitly be uſed for this purpoſe; which being learned by heart, will always be ready at hand to employ his devotion; and the matter of them being various, ſome for pardon of ſin, ſome for Grace, ſome for the light of Gods countenance, ſome for the Church, ſome for Thanksgiving, &c. every man may fit himſelf according to the preſent need and temper of his Soul. I have given theſe not as a full collection, but only a taſte, by which the Readers appetite may be raiſed to ſearch after more in that Book, and other parts of Holy Scripture.*

COLLECTS *for ſeveral* GRACES.

For Faith.

O Bleſſed Lord, whom without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe, let thy Spirit, I beſeech thee, work in me ſuch a Faith, as may be acceptable in thy ſight, even ſuch as worketh by love. O let me not reſt in a dead ineffectual Faith, but grant that it may be ſuch as may ſhew it ſelf by my works, that it may be that victorious Faith which may enable me to overcome the world, and conform me to the Image of that Chriſt, on whom I believe; that ſo at the laſt I may receive the end of my Faith, even the Salvation of my Soul, by the ſame Jeſus Chriſt.

For Hope.

O Lord, who art the hope of all the ends of the Earth, let me never be deſtitute of a well grounded hope, nor yet poſſeſt with a vain preſumption, ſuffer me not to think thou wilt either be reconciled to my ſins, or reject my repentance: But give me, I beſeech thee, ſuch a hope as may be anſwerable to the only ground of hope, thy promiſes, and ſuch as may

both encourage and enable me to purifie my ſelf from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit, that ſo it may indeed become to me an anchor of the Soul both ſure and ſtedfaſt, entring even within the vail; whither the fore-runner is for me entred, even Jeſus Chriſt my High Prieſt and bleſſed Redeemer.

For the Love of God.

O Holy and gracious Lord, who art infinitely excellent in thy ſelf, and infinitely bountiful and compaſſionate towards me, I beſeech thee ſuffer not my heart to be ſo hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, as to reſiſt ſuch charms of love, but let them make deep and laſting impreſſions on my Soul. Lord, thou art pleaſed to require my heart, and thou only haſt right to it. O let me not be ſo ſacrilegiouſly unjuſt as to alienate any part of it, but enable me to render it up whole and entire to thee. But, O my God, thou ſeeſt it is already uſurped, the World with its vanities hath ſeized it, and like a ſtrong Man armed keeps poſſeſſion. O thou who art ſtronger come upon him, and take this unworthy heart of mine as thine own ſpoil, refine it with that purifying fire of thy love, that it may be a fit habitation for thy Spirit. Lord, if thou ſee it fit, be pleaſed to let me taſte of thoſe joys, thoſe raviſhments of thy love, wherewith thy Saints have been ſo tranſported. But if in this I know not what I ask, if I may not chuſe my place in thy Kingdom, yet, O Lord, deny me not to drink of thy cup, let me have ſuch a ſincerity and degree of love, as may make me endure any thing for thy ſake, ſuch a perfect love as may caſt out all fear and ſloth too, that nothing may ſeem to me too grievous to ſuffer, or too difficult to do in obedience to thee; that ſo expreſſing my love by keeping thy Commandments, I may by thy mercy at laſt obtain that Crown of Life, which thou haſt promiſed to thoſe that love thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

For Sincerity.

O Holy Lord, who requireſt truth in the inward parts, I humbly beſeech thee to purge me from all hypocriſie and unſincerity. The heart, O Lord, is deceitful above all things, and my heart is deceitful above all hearts: O thou who ſearcheſt the heart and reins, try me, and ſeek the ground of my heart, and ſuffer not any accurſed thing to lurk within me, but purifie me even with fire, ſo thou conſume my droſs. O Lord, I cannot deceive thee, but I may moſt eaſily deceive my ſelf. I beſeech thee let me not reſt in any ſuch deceit; but bring me to a ſight and hatred of my moſt hidden corruptions, that I may not cheriſh any darling luſt, but make an utter deſtruction of every *Amalekite*. O ſuffer me not to ſpeak peace to my ſelf, when there is no peace, but grant I may judge of my ſelf as thou judgeſt of me, that I may never be at peace with my ſelf, till I am at perfect peace with thee, and by purity of heart be qualified to ſee thee in thy Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For devotion in Prayer.

O Gracious Lord God, who not only permitteſt, but inviteſt us miſerable and needy creatures, to preſent our petitions to thee, grant I beſeech thee, that the frequency of my prayer may be ſomewhat proportionable to thoſe continual needs I have of thy mercy. Lord, I confeſs, it is the greateſt honour and greateſt advantage, thus to be allowed acceſs to thee; yet ſo ſottiſh and ſtupid is my profane heart, that it ſhuns or fruſtrates the opportunities of it. My Soul, O Lord, is poſſeſt with a ſpirit of

of infirmity, it is bowed together, and can in no wiſe lift up it ſelf to thee. O be thou pleaſed to cure this ſad, this miſerable diſeaſe, to enſpirit and enliven this earthly droſſy heart, that it may freely mount towards thee; that I may ſet a true value on this moſt valuable priviledge, and take delight in approaching to thee: And that my approaches may be with a reverence ſome way anſwerable to that awful Majeſty I come before; with an importunity and earneſtneſs anſwerable to thoſe preſſing wants I have to be ſupplied; and with ſuch a fixedneſs and attention of mind, as no wandring thoughts may interrupt: That I may no more incur the guilt of drawing near to thee with my lips, when my heart is far from thee, or have my prayers turned into ſin; but may ſo ask that I may receive, ſeek that I may find, knock that it may be opened unto me; that from praying to thee here, I may be tranſlated to the praiſing thee eternally in thy glory, through the Merits and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt.

For Humility.

O Thou High and Lofty One, that inhabiteſt Eternity, yet art pleaſed to dwell with the humble ſpirit, pour into my heart, I beſeech thee, that excellent grace of Humility, which may utterly work out all thoſe vain conceits I have of my ſelf; Lord, convince me powerfully of my own wretchedneſs, make me to ſee that I am miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and not only duſt, but ſin; that ſo in all thy diſpenſations towards me, I may lay my hand upon my mouth, and heartily acknowledge that I am leſs than the leaſt of thy mercies, and greater than the greateſt of thy judgments. And, O Lord, grant me not only to walk humbly with my God, but even with Men alſo, that I may not only ſubmit my ſelf to thy rebukes, but even to thoſe of my fellow Chriſtians, and with meekneſs receive and obey their admonitions. And make me ſo to behave my ſelf towards all, that I never do any thing through ſtrife and vain glory; and to that end grant, that in lowlineſs of mind I may eſteem every other Man better than my ſelf, and be willing that others ſhould eſteem them ſo alſo: That I neither nouriſh any high opinion of my ſelf, nor covet one among others, but that deſpiſing the vain praiſe of Men, I may ſeek that praiſe which cometh from thee only. That ſo inſtead of thoſe mean ſervile Arts I have uſed to recommend me to the eſteem of Men, I may now imploy all my induſtry and care to approve my ſelf to thee, who reſiſteſt the proud, and giveſt grace to the humble: Grant this, O Lord, for his ſake, who humbled himſelf unto the death of the Croſs, Jeſus Chriſt.

For the Fear of God.

O Glorious Majeſty, who only art high and to be feared, poſſeſs my Soul with a holy awe and reverence of thee, that I may give thee the honour due unto thy Name, and may bear ſuch a reſpect to all things which relate to thee, that I may never profane any holy thing, or ſacrilegiouſly invade what thou haſt ſet apart to thy ſelf. And, O Lord, ſince thou art a God that wilt not clear the guilty, let the dread of thy juſtice make me tremble to provoke thee in any thing. O let me not ſo miſplace my fear, as to be afraid of a Man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man, who ſhall be made as graſs, and forget the Lord my Maker; but repleniſh my Soul with that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wiſdom, which may be as a bridle to all my brutiſh appetites, and keep me in a conſtant conformity to thy holy will. Hear me, O Lord, I beſeech thee, and put this fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee, but may with fear and trembling work out my own ſalvation, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For

For Truſt on God.

O Almighty Lord, who never faileſt them that truſt on thee, Give me grace, I beſeech thee, in all my difficulties and diſtreſſes, to have recourſe to thee, to reſt and depend on thee: thou ſhalt keep him, O Lord, in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtaid on thee, O let me always reſt on this firm Pillar, and never exchange it for the broken reeds of worldly ſuccours; ſuffer not my heart to be overcharged with the cares of this life, taking thought what I ſhall eat, or drink, or wherewithal I ſhall be cloathed, but grant that having by honeſt labour and induſtry done my part, I may chearfully commit my ſelf to thy providence, caſting all my care upon thee; and being careful for nothing, but to be of the number of thoſe whom thou owneſt and careſt for, even ſuch as keep thy Teſtimonies, and think upon thy Commandments to do them. That ſeeking firſt thy Kingdom and the righteouſneſs thereof, all theſe outward things may be added unto me in ſuch a meaſure as thy wiſdom knows beſt for me; grant this, O Lord, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.

For Thankfulneſs.

O Moſt gracious and bountiful Lord, who filleſt all things living with good, and expecteſt no other return, but praiſe and thankſgiving; let me, O Lord, never defraud thee of that ſo eaſie tribute, but let my heart be ever filled with the ſenſe, and my mouth with the acknowledgment of thy mercies. It is a joyful and pleaſant thing to be thankful; O ſuffer me not, I beſeech thee, to loſe my part in that Divine pleaſure; but grant that as I daily receive bleſſings from thee, ſo I may daily from an affectionate and devout heart offer up thanks to thee; and grant that not only my lips, but my life may ſhew forth thy praiſe, by conſecrating my ſelf to thy ſervice, and walking in holineſs and righteouſneſs before thee all the days of my life, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord and bleſſed Saviour.

For Contrition.

O Holy Lord, who art a merciful embracer of true penitents, but yet a conſuming fire towards obſtinate ſinners; how ſhall I approach thee, who have ſo many provoking ſins to inflame thy wrath, and ſo little ſincere repentance to incline thy mercy! O be thou pleaſed to ſoften and melt this hard obdurate heart of mine, that I may heartily bewail the iniquities of my life; ſtrike this rock, O Lord, that the waters may flow out, even flouds of tears to waſh my polluted conſcience. My drowzy Soul hath too long ſlept ſecurely in ſin; Lord, awake it, though it be with thunder, and let me rather feel thy terrors than not feel my ſin. Thou ſenteſt thy bleſſed ſon to heal the broken-hearted; but, Lord, what will that avail me, if my heart be whole? O break it that it may be capable of this healing vertue; and grant, I beſeech thee, that having once taſted the bitterneſs of ſin, I may fly from it as from the face of a Serpent, and bring forth fruits of Repentance in amendment of life, to the praiſe and glory of thy grace in Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Redeemer.

For Meekneſs.

O Bleſſed Jeſu, who waſt led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, let I beſeech thee, that admirable example of Meekneſs quench in me all ſparks of anger and revenge, and work in me ſuch a gentleneſs and calmneſs of Spi-

rit,

rit, as no provocations may ever be able to diſturb. Lord, grant I may be ſo far from offering the leaſt injury, that I may never return the greateſt, any otherwiſe than with prayers and kindneſs: that I who have ſo many talents to be forgiven by thee, may never exact pence of my brethren; but that putting on bowels of mercy, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, thy peace may rule in my heart, and make it an acceptable habitation to thee; who art the Prince of Peace, to whom with the Father and holy Spirit be all honour and glory for ever.

For Chaſtity.

O Holy and immaculate Jeſus, whoſe firſt deſcent was into the Virgins womb, and who doſt ſtill love to inhabit only in pure and Virgin hearts, I beſeech thee ſend thy Spirit of purity to cleanſe me from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit; my body, O Lord, is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt; O let me never pollute that Temple with any uncleanneſs. And becauſe out of the heart proceed the things that defile the Man, Lord, grant me to keep my heart with all diligence, that no impure or foul thoughts be harboured there: but enable me I beſeech thee, to keep both body and ſoul pure and undefiled, that ſo I may glorifie thee here both in body and ſpirit, and be glorified in both with thee hereafter.

For Temperance.

O Gracious Lord, who haſt in thy bounty to Mankind offered to us the uſe of thy good creatures for our corporal refreſhment: grant that I may always uſe this liberty with thankfulneſs and moderation. O let me never be ſo enſlaved to that brutiſh pleaſure of taſte, that my Table become a ſnare to me; but give me, I beſeech thee, a perfect abhorrence of all degrees of exceſs, and let me eat and drink only for thoſe ends, and according to thoſe meaſures which thou haſt aſſigned me, for health and not for luxury. And Lord, grant that my purſuits may be not after the meat that periſheth, but after that which endureth to everlaſting life; that hungring and thirſting after righteouſneſs I may be filled with thy grace here, and thy glory hereafter, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Contentedneſs.

O Merciful God, thy wiſdom is infinite to chuſe, and thy love forward to diſpenſe good things to us; O let me always fully and entirely reſign my ſelf to thy diſpoſals, have no deſires of my own, but a perfect ſatisfaction in thy choices for me; that ſo in whatſoever eſtate I am, I may be therein content. Lord, grant I may never look with murmuring on my own condition, nor with envy on other mens. And to that end, I beſeech thee, purge my heart of all covetous affections. O let me never yield up any corner of my ſoul to Mammon, but give me ſuch a contempt of theſe fading riches, that whether they increaſe or decreaſe, I may never ſet my heart upon them, but that all my care may be to be rich towards God, to lay up my treaſure in Heaven; that I may ſo ſet my affections on things above, that when Chriſt who is my life ſhall appear, I may alſo appear with him in glory. Grant this, O Lord, for the merits of the ſame Jeſus Chriſt.

For Diligence.

O Lord, who haſt in thy wiſdom ordained that Man ſhould be born to labour, ſuffer me not to reſiſt that deſign of thine, by giving my ſelf up to ſloth and idleneſs; but grant I may ſo employ my time, and all other talents thou haſt intruſted me with, that I may not fall under the ſentence of the ſlothful and wicked ſervant. Lord, if it be thy will, make me ſome way uſeful to others, that I may not live an unprofitable part of Mankind; but however, O Lord, let me not be uſeleſs to my ſelf, but grant I may give all diligence to make my calling and election ſure. My ſoul is beſet with many and vigilant adverſaries; O let me not fold my hands to ſleep in the midſt of ſo great dangers, but watch and pray, that I enter not into temptation; enduring hardneſs as a good Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt, till at the laſt from this ſtate of warfare, thou tranſlate me to the ſtate of triumph and bliſs in thy Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Juſtice.

O Thou King of Righteouſneſs, who haſt commanded us to keep judgment and do juſtice, be pleaſed by thy Grace to cleanſe my heart and hands from all fraud and injuſtice, and give me a perfect integrity and uprightneſs in all my dealings. O make me ever abhor to uſe my power to oppreſs, or my skill to deceive my brother; and grant I may moſt ſtrictly obſerve that ſacred rule, of doing as I would be done to, that I may not diſhonour my Chriſtian profeſſion by an unjuſt and fraudulent life, but in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, have my converſation in the world; never ſeeking to heap up treaſures in this life; but preferring a little with righteouſneſs before great revenues without right. Lord, make me exactly careful to render to every Man what by any ſort of obligation becomes his due, that I may never break the bond of any of thoſe relations that thou haſt placed me in, but may ſo behave my ſelf towards all, that none may have any evil thing to ſay of me; that ſo if it be poſſible, I may have peace with all men, or however, I may, by keeping innocency, and taking heed to the thing that is right, have peace at the laſt, even peace with thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

For Charity.

O Merciful Lord, who haſt made of one bloud, and redeemed by one ranſome all Nations of Men, let me never harden my bowels againſt any that partake of the ſame nature and redemption with me, but grant me an univerſal charity towards all Men. Give me, O thou father of compaſſions, ſuch a tenderneſs and meltingneſs of heart, that I may be deeply affected with all the miſeries and calamities outward or inward of my brethren, and diligently employ all my abilities for their ſuccour and relief. O let not an unchriſtian ſelf-love poſſeſs my heart, but drive out that accurſed ſpirit, and let thy ſpirit of love enter and dwell there, and make me ſeek, not to pleaſe my ſelf, but my Neighbour for his good to edification, even as Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf. Lord make me a faithful Steward of all thoſe Talents thou haſt committed to me for the benefit of others, that ſo when thou ſhalt call me to give an account of my Stewardſhip, I may do it with joy, and not with grief. Grant this, merciful Lord, I beſeech thee, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.

For Perſeverance.

O Eternal and unchangeable Lord God, who art the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever; Be thou pleaſed to communicate ſome ſmall ray of that Excellence, ſome degree of that ſtability to me thy wretched creature, who am light and unconſtant, turned about with every blaſt; my underſtanding is very deceivable, O eſtabliſh it in thy truth, keep it from the ſnares of ſeducing ſpirits, that I may not be led away with the error of the wicked, and fall from my own ſtedfaſtneſs: My Will alſo, O Lord, is irreſolute and wavering, and doth not cleave ſtedfaſtly unto God; my goodneſs is but as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it paſſeth away. O ſtrengthen and confirm me, and whatever good work thou haſt wrought in me, be pleaſed to accompliſh and perform it until the day of Chriſt. Lord, thou ſeeſt my weakneſs, and thou knoweſt the number and ſtrength of thoſe temptations I have to ſtruggle with. O leave me not to my ſelf, but cover thou my head in the day of battel, and in all ſpiritual combates make me more than Conqueror through him that loved me. O let no terrors or flatteries either of the world or my own fleſh ever draw me from my obedience to thee, but grant that I may continue ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and by patient continuing in well-doing ſeek, and at laſt obtain Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, and Eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A brief Paraphraſe *of the*

LORDS PRAYER,

To be uſed as a Prayer.

[*Our Father which art in Heaven.*]

O Lord, who dwelleſt in the higheſt Heavens, thou art the Author of our being, thou haſt alſo begotten us again unto a lively hope, and carrieſt towards us the tenderneſs and bowels of a compaſſionate Father. O make us to render to thee the love and obedience of children; and that we may reſemble thee *our Father in Heaven* (that place of true delight and purity) give us a holy diſdain of all the deceitful pleaſures and foul pollutions of this world, and ſo raiſe up our minds, that we may always have our converſation in Heaven, from whence we look for our Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

[1. *Hallowed be thy Name.*]

STrike ſuch an awe in our hearts, that we may humbly reverence thee in *Thy Name*, which is great, wonderful and holy; and carry ſuch a ſacred reſpect to all things that relate to thee and thy worſhip, as may expreſs our reverence to thy great Majeſty. Let all the people praiſe thee, O God, let all the people praiſe thee.

[2. *Thy Kingdom come.*]

EStabliſh thy Throne and rule for ever in our Souls, and by the power of thy grace ſubdue all thoſe rebellious corruptions that exalt themſelves againſt thee: They are thoſe enemies of thine which would not thou ſhould'ſt reign over them. O Let them be brought forth and ſlain before thee; and make us ſuch faithful ſubjects of this thy *Kingdom of Grace*, that we may be capable of the *Kingdom of Glory*, and then Lord Jeſus come quickly.

[3. *Thy will be done in Earth*, &c.]

ENable us by thy grace chearfully to ſuffer *thy Will* in all ~~thy~~ our afflictions, and readily perform it in all thy commands: give us of that heavenly zeal to thy Service, wherewith the bleſſed Angels of thy preſence are inſpired, that we may obey thee with the like fervor and alacrity, and that following them in their obedience, we may be joyned with them to ſing eternal praiſes in thy Kingdom, to God, and to the Lamb for ever.

[4. *Give us this day our*, &c.]

GIve us that continual ſupply of thy Grace, which may ſuſtain and nouriſh our ſouls unto eternal life. And be thou pleaſed alſo to provide for our bodies all thoſe things which thou ſeeſt fit for their ſupport, through this our earthly Pilgrimage; and make us chearfully to reſt on thee for them, firſt ſeeking thy Kingdom and the righteouſneſs thereof, and then not doubting but all theſe things ſhall be added unto us.

[5. *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, &c.]

HEal our Souls, O Lord, for we have ſinned againſt thee, let thy tender mercies abound towards us, in the *forgiveneſs of all our offences*; And grant, O Lord, that we may never forfeit this pardon of thine, by denying ours to our brethren, but give us thoſe bowels of compaſſion to others which we ſtand in ſo much greater need of from thee, that we may *forgive* as fully and finally upon Chriſts command, as we deſire to be *forgiven*, for his merits and interceſſion.

[6. *Lead us not into Temptation*, &c.]

O Lord, we have no ſtrength againſt thoſe multitudes of *Temptations* that daily aſſault us, only our eyes are upon thee; O be thou pleaſed either to reſtrain them, or aſſiſt us, and in thy faithfulneſs ſuffer us not to be *tempted* above that we are able, but in all our temptations make us a way to eſcape, that we be not overcome by them, but may when thou ſhalt call us to it, reſiſt even unto bloud, ſtriving againſt ſin, that being faithful unto death, thou mayeſt give us the crown of life.

[*For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.]

HEar us, and graciouſly anſwer our Petitions, for thou art the great *King* over all the earth, whoſe *Power* is infinite, and art able to do for us above all that we can ask or think, and to whom belongeth the *Glory* of all that good thou workeſt in us or for us. Therefore bleſſing, honour, glory and power be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, to our God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Pious EJACULATIONS *taken out of the Book of* PSALMS.

For Pardon of Sin.

HAve mercy on me, O God, after thy great goodneſs, according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

Waſh me throughly from my wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my ſin.

Turn thy face from my ſins, and put out all my miſdeeds.

My miſdeeds prevail againſt me; O be thou merciful unto my ſins.

Enter not into Judgment with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.

For thy Names ſake, O Lord, be merciful unto my ſin, for it is great.

Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my Soul. O ſave me for thy mercies ſake.

For Grace.

TEach me to do the thing that pleaſeth thee, for thou art my God.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth; O knit my heart to thee, that I may fear thy name.

Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.

O let my heart be ſound in thy Statutes, that I be not aſhamed.

Incline my heart unto thy Teſtimonies, and not to covetouſneſs.

Turn away mine eyes leſt they behold vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.

I am a ſtranger upon earth, O hide not thy Commandments from me.

Lord, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wiſdom.

For the Light of Gods Countenance.

LORD, why abhorreſt thou my Soul, and hideſt thy face from me? O hide not thou thy face from me, nor caſt thy ſervant away in diſpleaſure.

Thy loving kindneſs is better than life it ſelf.

Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon me.

Comfort the Soul of thy ſervant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul.

Thanksgiving.

I Will always give thanks unto the Lord, his praiſe ſhall ever be in my Mouth.

Thou art my God, and I will thank thee, thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee.

I will ſing unto the Lord, as long as I live, I will praiſe my God whilſt I have my being.

Praiſed be God, which hath not caſt out my Prayer, nor turned his mercy from me.

Bleſſed be the Lord God, even the God of Iſrael, which only doth wondrous things:

And bleſſed be the Name of his Majeſty for ever, and all the Earth ſhall be filled with his Majeſty. *Amen, Amen.*

For Deliverance from Trouble.

BE merciful unto me, O Lord, be merciful unto me, for my Soul truſteth in thee, and under the ſhadow of thy wings ſhall be my refuge until theſe calamities be over-paſt.

Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies, for I flee unto thee to hide me.

O keep my Soul, and deliver me: Let me not be confounded, for I have put my truſt in thee.

Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord, for he ſhall pluck my feet out of the net.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me: for I am deſolate and in miſery.

The ſorrows of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my Troubles.

For the Church.

O Be favourable and gracious unto Sion, build thou the walls of Jeruſalem.

O God, wherefore art thou abſent from us ſo long? Why is thy wrath ſo hot againſt the ſheep of thy paſture?

O think upon thy Congregation, whom thou haſt purchaſed and Redeemed of old.

Look upon the Tribe of thine inheritance, and Mount Sion where thou haſt dwelt.

It is time for thee Lord to lay to thy hand, for they have deſtroyed thy Law.

Ariſe, O God, and maintain thine own cauſe: deliver Iſrael, O God, out of all his troubles.

Brief Heads of Self-Examination, eſpecially before the Sacrament, collected out of the foregoing Treatiſe, concerning the breaches of our Duty.

To GOD.

FAITH.

NOt believing there is a God.
Not believing his Word.
Not believing it practically, ſo as to live according to our belief.

HOPE.

DEſpairing of Gods Mercy, ſo as to neglect duty.
Preſuming groundleſly on it, whilſt we go on in wilful ſin.

LOVE.

NOt loving God for his own Excellencies.
Not loving him for his Goodneſs to us.
Not labouring to pleaſe him.
Not deſiring to draw near to him in his Ordinances.
Not longing to enjoy him in Heaven.

FEAR.

NOt fearing God ſo as to keep from offending him.
Fearing man above him, by committing ſin, to ſhun ſome outward ſuffering.

TRUST.

NOt truſting on God in dangers and diſtreſſes.
Uſing unlawful means to bring us out of them.
Not depending on God for ſupply of our Wants.
Immoderate Care for outward things.
Neglecting to labour, and expecting God ſhould ſupport us in our idleneſs.
Not looking up to God for a bleſſing on our honeſt endeavours.

HUMILITY.

NOt having a high eſteem of God.
Not ſubmitting obediently to act his Will.
Not patiently ſuffering it, but murmuring at his Corrections.
Not amending by them.
Not being thankful to him.
Not acknowledging his Wiſdom in chuſing for us, but having eager and impatient deſires of our own.

HONOUR.

NOt honouring God by a reverent uſage of the things that relate to him.
Behaving our ſelves irreverently in his Houſe.
Robbing God by taking things that are conſecrated to him.
Profaning Holy times, the Lords Day, and the Feaſts and Faſts of the Church.
Neglecting to read the Holy Scriptures, not

not marking when we do read.
Being careleſs to get knowledge of our duty, chuſing rather to continue ignorant, than put our ſelves to the pains or charge of learning.
Placing Religion in hearing of Sermons, without Practice.
Breaking our Vow made at Baptiſm.
By reſorting to Witches and Conjurers, i. e. to the Devil.
By loving the Pomps and Vanities of the World, and following its ſinful cuſtoms.
By fulfilling the luſts of the fleſh.
Profaning the Lords Supper.
By coming to it ignorantly, without Examination, Contrition, and purpoſes of New life.
By behaving our ſelves irreverently at it, without Devotion and ſpiritual affection.
By neglecting to keep the Promiſes made at it.
Profaning Gods Name, by blaſphemous thoughts, or Diſcourſe.
Giving others occaſion to Blaſpheme him by our vile and wicked lives.
Taking unlawful OATHS.
Perjury.
Swearing in ordinary Communication.

WORSHIP.

NOt Worſhipping God.
Omitting Prayers, publick or private, and being glad of a pretence to do ſo.
Asking unlawful things, or to unlawful ends.
Not purifying our hearts from ſin before we pray.
Not praying with Faith and Humility.
Coldneſs and deadneſs in Prayer.
Wandring thoughts in it.
Irreverent geſtures of body in Prayer.

REPENTANCE.

NEglecting the duty of Repentance.
Not calling our ſelves to daily account for our ſins.
Not aſſigning any ſet or Solemn times for Humiliation, and Confeſſion, or too ſeldom.
Not deeply conſidering our ſins, to beget Contrition.
Not acting revenge upon our ſelves, by Faſting, and other acts of Mortification.

IDOLATRY.

OUtward Idolatry in Worſhipping of Creatures.
Inward Idolatry, in placing our love, and other affections more on Creatures than the Creator.

To our SELVES.

HUMILITY.

BEing puft up with high conceits of our ſelves.
In reſpect of Natural parts, as Beauty, Wit, &c.
Of worldly riches and honours.
Of Grace.
Greedily ſeeking the praiſe of men.
Directing Chriſtian Actions, as Prayer, alms, &c. to that end.
Committing ſins to avoid reproach from wicked men.

MEEKNES.

DIſturbing our minds with Anger and peeviſhneſs.

CONSIDERATION.

NOt carefully Examining what our eſtate towards God is.
Not trying our ſelves by the true Rule, i. e. our obedience to Gods Commands.
Not weighing the Lawfulneſs of our Actions before we venture on them.
Not examining our paſt Actions, to Repent of the ill, to give God the glory of the good.

CONTENTEDNES.

UNcontentedneſs in our eſtates.
Greedy deſires after Honour and Riches.
Seeking to gain them by ſinful means.
Envying the condition of other men.

DILIGENCE, WATCHFULNES.

BEing Negligent in obſerving and reſiſting temptations.
Not improving Gods gifts, outward, or inward, to his Honour. *Abuſing*

Abuſing our natural parts, as Wit, Memory, &c. to ſin.
Neglecting or reſiſting the motions of Gods Spirit.

CHASTITY.

Uncleanneſs, adultery, fornication, unnatural luſts, &c.
Uncleanneſs of the Eye and Hand.
Filthy and obſcene Talking.
Impure Fancies and Deſires.
Heightning of Luſt by pampering the body.
Not labouring to ſubdue it by Faſting, or other ſeverities.

TEMPERANCE.

Eating too much.
Making pleaſure, not health, the end of Eating.
Being too curious or coſtly in Meats.
Drunkenneſs.
Drinking more than is uſeful to our bodies, though not to Drunkenneſs.
Waſting the Time or Eſtate in good Fellowſhip.
Abuſing our ſtrength of brain to the making others Drunk.
Immoderate Sleeping.
Idleneſs and Negligence in our Callings.
Uſing unlawful Recreations.
Being too vehement upon Lawful ones.
Spending too much time at them.
Being drawn by them to Anger or Covetouſneſs
Being proud of Apparel.
Striving to go beyond our rank.
Beſtowing too much time, care or coſt about it.
Abſtaining from ſuch Exceſſes, not out of conſcience but covetouſneſs.
Pinching our bodies to fill our Purſes.

To our NEIGHBOUR.

NEGATIVE JUSTICE.

Being injurious to our Neighbour.
Delighting cauſleſly to grieve his mind.
Enſnaring his Soul in ſin, by Command, Counſel, Enticement or Example.
Affrighting him from godlineſs, by our ſcoffing at it.
Not ſeeking to bring thoſe to Repentance whom we have led into ſin.

MURDER.

Murder open or ſecret.
Drawing men to intemperance or other vices, which may bring diſeaſes or death.
Stirring men up to quarrelling and fighting.
Maiming or hurting the body of our Neighbour.
Fierceneſs and Rage againſt him.

ADULTERY.

Coveting our Neighbours Wife.
Actually defiling her.

MALICE.

Spoiling the Goods of others upon ſpight and malice.

COVETOUSNES.

Coveting to gain them to our ſelves.

OPPRESSION.

Oppreſſion by violence and force, or colour of Law.

THEFT.

Not paying what we borrow.
Not paying what we have voluntarily promiſed.
Keeping back the Wages of the Servant and hireling.

DECEIT.

Unfaithfulneſs in Truſts, whether to the Living or Dead.
Uſing arts of Deceit in Buying and Selling.
Exacting upon the neceſſities of our Neighbours.

FALSE-WITNES.

Blaſting the credit of our Neighbour.
By falſe Witneſs.
By railing.
By Whiſpering.
Incouraging others in their Slanders.

Being

Being forward to believe all ill reports of our Neighbour.
Cauſleſs ſuſpicions.
Raſh judging of him.
Deſpiſing him for his infirmities.
Inviting others to do ſo, by ſcoffing and deriding him.
Bearing any Malice in the heart.
Secret wiſhing of death or hurt to our Neighbour.
Rejoycing when any Evil befals him.
Neglecting to make what Satisfaction we can, for any ſort of injury done to our Neighbour.

POSITIVE JUSTICE, HUMILITY, LYING.

CHurliſh and proud behaviour to others.
Froward and peeviſh converſation.
Bitter and reproachful language.
Curſing.
Not paying the reſpect due to the qualities or gifts of others.
Proudly over-looking them.
Seeking to leſſen others eſteem of them.
Not employing our Abilities, whether of Mind or Eſtate, in adminiſtring to thoſe whoſe wants require it.

GRATITUDE.

UNthankfulneſs to our Benefactors. Eſpecially thoſe that admoniſh us.
Not amending upon their reproof.
Being angry at them for it.
Not reverencing our Civil Parent, the lawful Magiſtrate.
Judging and ſpeaking evil of him.
Grudging his juſt Tributes.
Sowing ſedition among people.
Refuſing to obey his lawful Commands.
Riſing up againſt him, or taking part with them that do.
Deſpiſing our Spiritual Fathers.
Not loving them for their works ſake.
Not obeying thoſe commands of God they deliver to us.
Seeking to withhold from them their juſt maintenance.
Forſaking our lawful Paſtors to follow factious Teachers.

PARENTS.

STubborn and irreverent behaviour to our natural Parents.
Deſpiſing and publiſhing their infirmities.
Not loving them, nor endeavouring to bring them comfort.
Contemning their Counſels.
Murmuring at their Government.
Coveting their Eſtates, though by their death.
Not miniſtring to them in their wants of all ſorts.
Neglecting to pray for God's Bleſſing on the ſeveral ſorts of Parents.
Want of natural affection to Children.
Mothers refuſing to Nurſe them without a juſt impediment.
Not bringing them timely to Baptiſm.
Not early inſtructing them in the ways of God.
Suffering them for want of timely correction to get cuſtoms of ſin.
Setting them evil Examples.
Diſcouraging them by harſh and cruel uſage.
Not providing for their ſubſiſtence according to our ability.
Conſuming their portions in our own riot.
Reſerving all till our death, and letting them want in the mean time.
Not ſeeking to entail a bleſſing on them by our Chriſtian lives.
Not heartily praying for them.
Want of affection to our Natural brethren.
Envyings and heart-burnings towards them.

DUTY to BRETHREN.

NOt loving our ſpiritual brethren, i. e. our fellow-Chriſtians.
Having no fellow-feeling of their ſufferings.
Cauſleſly forſaking their Communion in Holy Duties.
Not taking deeply to heart the Deſolations of the Church.

MARRIAGE.

MArrying within the degrees forbidden.
Marrying for undue ends, as covetouſneſs, luſt, &c.
Unkind, froward, and unquiet behaviour towards the Husband or Wife.

Unfaith-

Unfaithfulneſs to the Bed.
Not bearing with the infirmities of each other.
Not endeavouring to advance one anothers good, ſpiritual or temporal.
The Wife reſiſting the lawful commands of her Husband.
Her ſtriving for Rule and Dominion over him.
Not praying for each other.

FRIENDSHIP.

UNfaithfulneſs to a Friend.
Betraying his ſecrets.
Denying him aſſiſtance in his needs.
Neglecting lovingly to admoniſh him.
Flattering him in his faults.
Forſaking his Friendſhip upon ſlight or no cauſe.
Making leagues in ſin inſtead of vertuous friendſhip.

SERVANTS.

SErvants diſobeying the lawful commands of their Maſters.
Purloining their goods.
Careleſly waſting them.
Murmuring at their rebukes.
Idleneſs.
Eye-ſervice.

MASTERS.

MAſters uſing ſervants tyrannically and cruelly.
Being too remiſs, and ſuffering them to neglect their duty.
Having no care of their Souls.
Not providing them means of inſtruction in Religion.
Not admoniſhing them when they commit Sins.
Not allowing them time and opportunity for Prayer, and the worſhip of God.

CHARITY.

WAnt of bowels and Charity to our Neighbours.
Not heartily deſiring their good, ſpiritual or temporal.
Not loving and forgiving enemies.
Taking actual Revenges upon them.
Falſeneſs, profeſſing kindneſs and acting none.
Not labouring to do all the good we can to the Soul of our Neighbour.
Not aſſiſting him to our power in his bodily diſtreſſes.
Not defending his good Name, when we know him ſlander'd.
Denying him any neighbourly office to preſerve or advance his eſtate.
Not defending him from oppreſſion, when we have power.
Not relieving him in his poverty.
Not giving liberally, or chearfully.

GOING TO LAW.

NOt loving PEACE.
Going to Law upon ſlight occaſions.
Bearing inward Enmity to thoſe we ſue.
Not labouring to make peace among others.

THe uſe of this Catalogue *of* Sins *is this, Upon days of* Humiliation, *eſpecially before the* Sacrament, *read them conſideringly over, and at every particular ask thine own heart,* Am I guilty of this? *And whatſoever by ſuch Examination thou findeſt thy ſelf faulty in, Confeſs particularly, and humbly to God, with all the heightning circumſtances, which may any way increaſe their guilts, and make ſerious reſolutions againſt every ſuch Sin for the future; after which thou mayeſt uſe this Form following.*

O LORD, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, for my iniquities are increaſed over my head, and my treſpaſs is grown up even unto Heaven. I have wrought all theſe great provocations, and that in the moſt provoking manner; they have not been only ſingle, but repeated acts of ſin: For, O Lord, of all this black Catalogue which I have now brought forth before thee, how few are there which I have not often committed? Nay, which are not become even habitual and cuſtomary to me? And to this frequency, I have added both a greedineſs, and obſtina-

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cy in ſinning, turning into my courſe as the Horſe ruſheth into the battel, doing evil with both hands, earneſtly, yea, hating to be reformed, and caſting thy words behind me, quenching thy Spirit within me, which teſtified againſt me, to turn me from my evil ways; and fruſtrating all thoſe outward means, whether of judgment or mercy, which thou haſt uſed to draw me to thy ſelf. Nay, O Lord, even my repentances may be numbred amongſt my greateſt ſins: They have ſometimes been feigned and hypocritical, always ſo ſlight and ineffectual, that they have brought forth no fruit in amendment of life; but I have ſtill returned with the dog to the vomit, and the ſow to the mire again, and have added the breach of reſolutions and vows, to all my former guilts. Thus, O Lord, I am become out of meaſure ſinful, and ſince I have thus choſen death, I am moſt worthy to take part in it, even in the ſecond death, the lake of fire and brimſtone. This, this, O Lord, is in juſtice to be the portion of my cup; to me belongs nothing but ſhame and confuſion of face eternally; But to thee, O Lord God, belongeth mercy and forgiveneſs, though I have rebelled againſt thee: O remember not my ſins and offences, but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodneſs. Thou ſenteſt thy Son to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt; behold, O Lord, I have gone aſtray like a ſheep that is loſt: O ſeek thy ſervant, and bring me back to the Shepherd and Biſhop of my Soul. Let thy Spirit work in me a hearty ſenſe and deteſtation of all my abominations, that true contrition of heart, which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe. And then be thou pleaſed to look on me, to take away all iniquity, and receive me graciouſly; and for his ſake who hath done nothing amiſs, be reconciled to me who have done nothing well; waſh away the guilt of my ſins in his bloud, and ſubdue the power of them by his grace: And grant, O Lord, that I may from this hour bid a final adieu to all ungodlineſs and worldly luſt, that I may never once more caſt a look toward *Sodom*, or long after the fleſh-pots of *Egypt*; but conſecrate my ſelf entirely to thee, to ſerve thee in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, reckoning my ſelf to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and bleſſed Saviour.

This penitential Pſalm *may alſo fitly be uſed.*

PSALM 51.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodneſs, according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

Waſh me throughly from my wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my ſin.

For I acknowledge my faults, and my ſin is ever before me.

Againſt thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight, that thou mightſt be juſtified in thy ſaying, and clear when thou art judged.

Behold I was ſhapen in wickedneſs, and in ſin hath my mother conceived me.

But lo, thou requireſt truth in the inward parts, and ſhalt make me to underſtand wiſdom ſecretly.

Thou ſhalt purge me with Hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean, thou ſhalt waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.

Thou ſhalt make me hear of joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.

Turn thy face from my ſins, and put out all my miſdeeds.

Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.

Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again, and ſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit.

Then ſhall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from bloud guiltineſs, O God, thou that art the God of my health, and my tongue ſhall ſing of thy Righteouſneſs.

Thou ſhalt open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe.

For thou deſireſt no ſacrifice, elſe would I give it thee: But thou delighteſt not in burnt-offering.

The ſacrifice of God is a troubled ſpirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, ſhalt thou not deſpiſe.

O be favourable and gracious unto Sion, *build thou the walls of* Jeruſalem.

Then ſhalt thou be pleaſed with the ſacrifices of righteouſneſs, with the burnt-offerings and oblations; then they ſhall offer young bullocks upon thine Altar.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever ſhall be, world without end, *Amen.*

PRAYERS BEFORE *The Receiving of the Bleſſed* SACRAMENT.

O Moſt merciful *God*, who haſt in thy great goodneſs prepared this ſpiritual feaſt for ſick and famiſhed Souls, make my deſires and gaſping after it, anſwerable to my needs of it. I have, with the prodigal, waſted that portion of grace thou beſtowedſt upon me; and therefore do infinitely want a ſupply out of this treaſury: But, O Lord, how ſhall ſuch a wretch as I dare to approach this holy Table? I am a dog, how ſhall I preſume to take the childrens bread? Or how ſhall this ſpiritual Manna, this food of Angels, be given to one who hath choſen to feed on husks with Swine? Nay, to one who hath already ſo often trampled theſe precious things under foot, either careleſly neglecting, or unworthily receiving theſe holy myſteries? O Lord, my horrible guiltineſs makes me tremble to come, and yet makes me not dare to keep away; for where, O Lord, ſhall my polluted Soul be waſhed, if not in this fountain which thou haſt opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs? Hither therefore I come, and thou haſt promiſed, that him that cometh to thee, thou wilt in no wiſe caſt out: This is, O Lord, the bloud of the New Teſtament; grant me ſo to receive it, that it may be to me for remiſſion of ſins, and though I have ſo often and ſo wretchedly broken my part of that Covenant, whereof this Sacrament is a ſeal, yet be thou graciouſly pleaſed to make good thine; to be merciful to my unrighteouſneſs, and to remember my ſins and my iniquities no more: And not only ſo, but to put thy laws into my heart, and to write them in my mind, and by the power of thy grace diſpoſe my Soul to ſuch a ſincere and conſtant obedience, that I may never again provoke thee. Lord, grant that in theſe holy myſteries I may not only commemorate, but effectually receive my bleſſed Saviour, and all the benefits of his Paſſion: And to that end give me ſuch a preparation of Soul as may qualifie me for it; give me a deep ſenſe of my ſins and unworthineſs, that being weary and heavy laden, I may be capable of his refreſhings, and by being ſuppled in my own tears, I may be the fitter to be waſhed in his bloud; raiſe up my dull and earthly mind from groveling here below, and inſpire it with a holy zeal, that I may with ſpiritual affection approach this ſpiritual feaſt; and let, O Lord, that infinite love of Chriſt in dying for ſo wretched a ſinner, inflame my frozen benum'd Soul, and kindle in me that ſacred fire of love to him,

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and that ſo vehement, that no waters may quench, no flouds drown it, ſuch as may burn up all my droſs, not leave one unmortified luſt in my Soul: And ſuch as may alſo extend it ſelf to all whom thou haſt given me command and example to love, even enemies as well as friends. Finally, O Lord, I beſeech thee to clothe me in the wedding garment, and make me, though of my ſelf a moſt unworthy, yet by thy mercy an acceptable gueſt at this holy Table; that I may not eat nor drink my own condemnation, but may have my pardon ſealed, my weakneſs repaired, my corruptions ſubdued, and my Soul ſo inſeparably united to thee, that no temptations may ever be able to diſſolve the union, but that being begun here in grace, it may be conſummated in Glory. Grant this, O Lord, for thy dear Sons ſake, Jeſus Chriſt.

Another.

O Bleſſed Jeſus, who once offeredſt up thy ſelf for me upon the Croſs, and now offereſt thy ſelf to me in the Sacrament, let not I beſeech thee, my impenitence and unworthineſs fruſtrate theſe ſo ineſtimable mercies to me, but qualifie me by thy grace to receive the full benefit of them. O Lord, I have abundant need of thee, but am ſo clogg'd with guilt, ſo holden with the cords of my ſins, that I am not able to move towards thee, O looſe me from this band, wherewith Satan and my own luſts have bound me, and draw me that I may run after thee. Lord, thou ſeeſt daily how eagerly I purſue the paths that lead to death; but when thou inviteſt me to life and glory, I turn my back, and forſake my own mercy. How often hath this feaſt been prepared, and I have with frivolous excuſes abſented my ſelf! or if I have come, it hath been rather to defie than to adore thee; I have brought ſuch troops of thy profeſſed enemies, unrepented ſins along with me, as if I came not to commemorate, but renew thy paſſion, crucifying thee afreſh, and putting thee to open ſhame. And now of what puniſhment ſhall I be thought worthy, who have thus trampled under foot the Son of God, and counted the bloud of the Covenant an unholy thing? Yet, O merciful Jeſu, this bloud is my only refuge: O let this make my atonement, or I periſh eternally. Wherefore didſt thou ſhed it, but to ſave ſinners? Neither can the merit of it be overwhelmed either by the greatneſs or number of ſins. I am a ſinner, a great one, O let me find its ſaving efficacy. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful to me, for my Soul truſteth in thee, and in the clefts of thy wounds ſhall be my refuge, until thy Fathers indignation be overpaſt. O thou who haſt as my high Prieſt ſacrificed for me, intercede for me alſo, and plead thy meritorious ſufferings on my behalf, and ſuffer not, O my Redeemer, the price of thy bloud to be utterly loſt: And grant, O Lord, that as the ſins I have to be forgiven are many, ſo I may love much. Lord, thou ſeeſt what faint, what cold affections I have towards thee; O warm and enliven them: And as in this Sacrament that tranſcendent love of thine in dying for me is ſhed forth, ſo I beſeech thee let it convey ſuch grace into me as may enable me to make ſome returns of love: O let this divine fire deſcend from Heaven into my Soul, and let my ſins be the burnt-offering for it to conſume, that there may not any corrupt affection, any curſed thing be ſheltered in my heart; that I may never again defile that place which thou haſt choſen for thy Temple. Thou diedſt, O dear Jeſu, to redeem me from all iniquity, O let me not again ſell my ſelf to work wickedneſs. But grant that I may approach thee at this time with moſt ſincere and fixed reſolutions of an entire reformation, and let me receive ſuch grace and ſtrength from thee, as may enable

me faithfully to perform them. Lord, there are many old habituated diſeaſes my Soul groans under. [*Here mention thy moſt prevailing corruptions.*] And though I lie never ſo long at the Pool of *Betheſda*, come never ſo often to thy Table, yet unleſs thou be pleaſed to put forth thy healing virtue, they will ſtill remain uncured. O thou bleſſed Phyſician of Souls, heal me, and grant that I may now ſo touch thee, that every one of theſe loathſom iſſues may immediately ſtanch, that theſe ſickneſſes may not be unto death, but unto the glory of thy mercy in pardoning, to the glory of thy grace in purifying ſo polluted a wretch. O Chriſt hear me, and grant I may now approach thee with ſuch humility and contrition, love and devotion, that thou mayſt vouchſafe to come unto me, and abide with me, communicating to me thy ſelf, and all the merits of thy Paſſion. And then, O Lord, let no accuſations of Satan, or my own conſcience amaze or diſtract me, but having peace with thee, let me alſo have peace in my ſelf, that this Wine may make glad, this Bread of life may ſtrengthen my heart, and enable me chearfully to run the way of thy Commandments. Grant this, merciful Saviour, for thine own bowels and compaſſions ſake.

EJACULATIONS to be uſed at the LORDS SUPPER.

LORD, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof. I have ſinned: What ſhall I do unto thee, O thou preſerver of Men?

[*Here recollect ſome of thy greateſt ſins.*]

If thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, O Lord, who may abide it?

But with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption.

Behold, O Lord, thy beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleaſed.

Hearken to the cry of his bloud, which ſpeaketh better things than that of *Abel*.

By his Agony and bloudy Sweat, by his Croſs and Paſſion, good Lord deliver me.

O Lamb of God, which takeſt away the ſins of the world, grant me thy Peace.

O Lamb of God, which takeſt away the ſins of the world, have mercy upon me.

Immediately before Receiving.

THou haſt ſaid that he that eateth thy fleſh, and drinketh thy bloud, hath eternal life.

Behold the ſervant of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.

At the Receiving of the Bread.

BY thy Crucified Body deliver me from this body of death.

At the Receiving of the Cup.

O Let this bloud of thine purge my conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God.

Lord, if thou wilt thou canſt make me clean.

O touch me, and ſay, I will, be thou clean.

After

After Receiving.

WHat ſhall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me?

I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.

Therefore bleſſing, honour, glory and power, be to him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, *Amen.*

I have ſworn, and am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy righteous judgments.

O hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my foot-ſteps ſlip not.

A Thanksgiving after the Receiving of the Sacrament.

OThou Fountain of all goodneſs, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, and to whom all honour and glory ſhould be returned, I deſire with all the moſt fervent and inflamed affections of a grateful heart, to bleſs and praiſe thee for thoſe ineſtimable mercies thou haſt vouchſafed me. Lord, what is man that thou ſhouldeſt ſo regard him, as to ſend thy beloved Son to ſuffer ſuch bitter things for him? But, Lord, what am I, the worſt of men, that I ſhould have any part in this atonement, who have ſo often deſpiſed him and his ſufferings? O the height and depth of this mercy of thine, that art pleaſed to admit me to the renewing of that Covenant with thee, which I have ſo often and ſo perverſly broken! That I, who am not worthy of that daily bread which ſuſtains the body, ſhould be made partaker of this bread of life, which nouriſheth the Soul, and that the God of all purity ſhould vouchſafe to unite himſelf to ſo polluted a wretch! O my God ſuffer me no more, I beſeech thee, to turn thy grace into wantonneſs, to make thy mercy an occaſion of ſecurity, but let this unſpeakable love of thine conſtrain me to obedience, that ſince my bleſſed Lord hath died for me, I may no longer live unto my ſelf, but to him. O Lord, I know there is no concord between Chriſt and *Belial*, therefore ſince he hath now been pleaſed to enter my heart, O let me never permit any luſt to chaſe him thence, but let him that hath ſo dearly bought me, ſtill keep poſſeſſion of me, and let nothing ever take me out of his hand. To this end be thou graciouſly pleaſed to watch over me, and defend me from all aſſaults of my ſpiritual enemies; but eſpecially deliver me from my ſelf, from the treachery of my own heart, which is too willing to yield it ſelf a prey. And where thou ſeeſt I am either by nature or cuſtom moſt weak, there do thou, I beſeech thee, magnifie thy power in my preſervation. [*Here mention thy moſt dangerous temptations:*] And Lord, let my Saviours ſufferings for my ſins, and the Vows I have now made againſt them never depart from my mind; but let the remembrance of the one enable me to perform the other, that I may never make truce with thoſe luſts which nailed his hands, pierced his ſide, and made his Soul heavy to the death: But that having now anew liſted my ſelf under his banner, I may fight manfully, and follow the Captain of my Salvation, even through a Sea of bloud. Lord, lift up my hands that hang down, and my feeble knees that I faint not in this warfare: O be thou my ſtrength, who am not able of my ſelf to ſtruggle with the ſlighteſt temptations. How often have I turned my back in the day of battel? How many of theſe Sacramental vows have I violated? And Lord, I have ſtill the ſame unconſtant deceitful heart to betray me to the breach of this. O thou who

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art Yea, and Amen, in whom there is no ſhadow of change, communicate to me, I beſeech thee, ſuch a ſtability of mind, that I may no more thus ſtart aſide like a broken bow; but that having my heart whole with thee, I may continue ſtedfaſt in thy Covenant, that not one good purpoſe which thy Spirit hath raiſed in me this day may vaniſh, as ſo many have formerly done, but that they may bring forth fruit unto life eternal. Grant this, O merciful Father, through the merits and mediation of my Crucified Saviour.

A Prayer of Interceſſion to be uſed either before or after the Receiving of the Sacrament.

O Moſt gracious Lord, who ſo tenderly lovedſt Mankind, as to give thy dear Son out of thy boſom to be a propitiation for the ſins of the whole world, grant that the effect of this Redemption may be as univerſal as the deſign of it, that it may be to the Salvation of All. O let no perſon by impenitence and wilful ſin forfeit his part in it, but by the power of thy grace bring all, even the moſt obſtinate ſinners to repentance. Enlighten all that ſit in darkneſs, all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks; take from them all blindneſs, hardneſs of heart and contempt of thy Word, and ſo fetch them home, bleſſed Lord, unto thy fold, that they may be ſaved among the number of the true Iſraelites. And for all thoſe, upon whom the Name of thy Son is called: Grant, O Lord, that their converſations may be ſuch as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt; that his name be no longer blaſphemed among the Heathens through us. O bleſſed Lord, how long ſhall Chriſtendom continue the vileſt part of the world, a ſink of all thoſe abominable pollutions, which even Barbarians deteſt? O let not our profeſſion and our practice be always at ſo wide a diſtance. Let not the Diſciples of the holy and immaculate Jeſus be of all others the moſt profane and impure. Let not the ſubjects of the Prince of Peace be of all others the moſt contentious and bloudy; But make us Chriſtians in deed as well as in name, that we may walk worthy of that holy Vocation wherewith we are called, and may all with one mind and one mouth glorifie thee the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Have mercy on this languiſhing Church, look down from Heaven the Habitation of thy holineſs and of thy glory. Where is thy zeal and thy ſtrength, the ſounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies towards us? Are they reſtrained? Be not wroth very ſore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever, but though our backſlidings are many, and we have grievouſly rebelled, yet according to all thy goodneſs, let thy anger and thy fury be turned away, and cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy Sanctuary which is deſolate, for the Lords ſake; and ſo ſeparate between us and our ſins, that they may no longer ſeparate between us and our God. Save and defend all Chriſtian Kings, Princes and Governours, eſpecially thoſe to whom we owe ſubjection; plead thou their cauſe, O Lord, againſt thoſe that ſtrive with them, and fight thou againſt thoſe that fight againſt them: And ſo guide and aſſiſt them in the diſcharge of that Office whereunto thou haſt appointed them, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty. Bleſs them that wait at thine Altar, open thou their lips that their mouth may ſhew forth thy praiſe. O let not the Lights of the world be put under buſhels, but place them in their Candleſticks, that they may give light to all that are in the houſe. Let not *Jeroboams* Prieſts profane thy Service, but let the ſeed of *Aaron* ſtill miniſter before thee. And, O thou Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, ſuccour and relieve all

all that are in affliction; deliver the outcaſt and poor, help them to right that ſuffer wrong, let the ſorrowful ſighing of the Priſoners come before thee, and according to the greatneſs of thy power, preſerve thou thoſe that are appointed to die; grant eaſe to thoſe that are in pain, ſupplies to thoſe that ſuffer want, give to all preſumptuous ſinners a ſence of their ſins, and to all deſpairing, a ſight of thy mercies; and do thou, O Lord, for every one abundantly above what they can ask or think. Forgive my enemies, perſecutors and ſlanderers, and turn their hearts. Pour down thy bleſſings on all my friends and benefactors, all who have commended themſelves to my prayers. [*Here thou mayeſt name particular perſons.*] And grant O merciful Father that through this bloud of the Croſs, we may all be preſented pure and unblameable, and unreproveable in thy ſight; that ſo we may be admitted into that place of purity, where no unclean thing can enter, there to ſing eternal Praiſes to Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt for ever.

A Prayer in times of common Perſecution.

O BLESSED Saviour who haſt made the Croſs the badge of thy Diſciples, enable me, I beſeech thee, willingly and chearfully to embrace it: Thou ſeeſt, O Lord, I am fallen into days, wherein he that departeth from evil maketh himſelf a Prey; O make me ſo readily to expoſe all my outward concernments, when my obedience to thee requireth it, that what falls as a Prey to men, may by thee be accepted as a Sacrifice to God. Lord preſerve me ſo by thy grace that I never ſuffer as an evil doer; and then, O Lord, if it be my lot to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let me not be aſhamed, but rejoyce that I am counted worthy to ſuffer for thy Name. O thou who for my ſake enduredſt the Croſs, and deſpiſedſt the ſhame, let the example of that love and patience prevail againſt all the tremblings of my corrupt heart, that no terrors may ever be able to ſhake my conſtancy, but that how long ſoever thou ſhalt permit the rod of the wicked to lie on my back, I may never put my hand unto wickedneſs. Lord, thou knoweſt whereof I am made, thou remembreſt that I am but fleſh; and fleſh, O Lord, ſhrinks at the approach of any thing grievous. It is thy Spirit, thy Spirit alone, that can uphold me: O eſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit, that I be not weary and faint in my mind. And by how much the greater thou diſcerneſt my weakneſs, ſo much the more do thou ſhew forth thy power in me, and make me, O Lord, in all temptations ſtedfaſtly to look to thee, the author and finiſher of my faith, that ſo I may run the race which is ſet before me, and reſiſt even unto bloud, ſtriving againſt ſin. O dear Jeſus, hear me, and though Satan deſire to have me, that he may winnow me as wheat, yet do thou, O bleſſed Mediator, pray for me that my faith fail not, but that though it be tried with fire, it may be found unto praiſe and glory, and honour at thy appearing. And, O Lord, I beſeech thee grant that I may preſerve not only conſtancy towards God, but charity alſo towards men, even thoſe whom thou ſhalt permit to be the inſtruments of my ſufferings: Lord, let me not fail to imitate that admirable meekneſs of thine, in loving and praying for my greateſt perſecutors; and do thou, O Lord, overcome all their evil with thy infinite goodneſs, turn their hearts, and draw them powerfully to thy ſelf, and at laſt receive both me and mine enemies into thoſe manſions of peace and reſt where thou reigneſt with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, one God for ever.

A Prayer in time of Affliction.

O JUST and holy Lord, who with rebukes doſt chaſten man for ſin, I deſire unfeignedly to humble my ſelf under thy mighty hand, which now lies heavy upon me; I heartily acknowledge, O Lord, that all I do, all I can ſuffer, is but the due reward of my deeds, and therefore in thy ſevereſt inflictions I muſt ſtill ſay, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. But, O Lord, I beſeech thee in judgment remember mercy, and though my ſins have enforced thee to ſtrike, yet conſider my weakneſs, and let not thy ſtripes be more heavy or more laſting than thou ſeeſt profitable for my Soul; correct me, but with the chaſtiſement of a father, not with the wounds of an enemy; and though thou take not off thy rod, yet take away thine anger. Lord, do not abhor my Soul, nor caſt thy ſervant away in diſpleaſure, but pardon my ſins, I beſeech thee; and if yet in thy fatherly wiſdom thou ſee fit to prolong thy corrections, thy bleſſed will be done. I caſt my ſelf, O Lord, at thy feet, do with me what thou pleaſeſt. Try me as ſilver is tried, ſo thou bring me out purified. And Lord, make even my fleſh alſo to ſubſcribe to this reſignation, that there may be nothing in me that may rebel againſt thy hand; but that having perfectly ſuppreſt all repining thoughts, I may chearfully drink of this cup. And how bitter ſoever thou ſhalt pleaſe to make it, Lord, let it prove medicinal, and cure all the diſeaſes of my Soul, that it may bring forth in me the peaceable fruit of Righteouſneſs. That ſo theſe light afflictions which are but for a moment, may work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt.

A Thanksgiving for Deliverance.

O Bleſſed Lord, who art gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil, I thankfully acknowledge before thee, that thou haſt not dealt with me after my ſins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities. My rebellions, O Lord, deſerve to be ſcourged with Scorpions, and thou haſt corrected them only with a gentle and fatherly Rod; neither haſt thou ſuffered me to lie long under that, but haſt given me a timely and a gracious iſſue out of my late diſtreſſes. O Lord, I will be glad and rejoyce in thy mercy, for thou haſt conſidered my trouble, and haſt known my Soul in adverſity. Thou haſt ſmitten, and thou haſt healed me. O let theſe various methods of thine have their proper effects upon my Soul, that I who have felt the ſmart of thy Chaſtiſements, may ſtand in awe and not ſin: And that I who have likewiſe felt the ſweet refreſhings of thy mercy, may have my heart raviſhed with it, and knit to thee in the firmeſt bands of love; and that by both I may be preſerved in a conſtant, entire obedience to thee all my days, through Jeſus Chriſt.

Directions for the time of Sickneſs.

W*Hen thou findeſt thy ſelf viſited with Sickneſs, thou art immediately to remember that it is God, which* with rebukes doth chaſten man for ſin. *And therefore let thy firſt care be, to find out what it is that provokes him to ſmite thee; and to that purpoſe Examine thine own heart, ſearch diligently what guilts lye there, confeſs them humbly and penitently to God, and for the greater ſecurity renew thy Repentance for all the old ſins of thy former life, beg moſt earneſtly*

neſtly and importunately his mercy and pardon in Chriſt Jeſus, and put on ſincere and zealous reſolutions of forſaking every evil way, for the reſt of that time which God ſhall ſpare thee. And that thy own heart deceive thee not in this ſo weighty a buſineſs, it will be wiſdom to ſend for ſome godly Divine, *not only to aſſiſt thee with his prayers, but with his counſel alſo.. And to that purpoſe open thy heart ſo freely to him, that he may be able to judge, whether thy Repentance be ſuch, as may give thee confidence to appear before Gods dreadful Tribunal, and that if it be not, he may help thee what he can towards the making it ſo. And when thou haſt thus provided for thy better part, thy Soul, then conſider thy Body alſo, and as the Wiſe man ſaith,* Ecclus. 38. 12. Give place to the Phyſician, for the Lord hath created him. *Uſe ſuch means as may be moſt likely to recover thy health, but always remember that the ſucceſs of them muſt come from God, and beware of* Aſa's *ſin, who* ſought to the Phyſicians, and not to the Lord, 2 Chron. 6. 12. *Diſpoſe alſo betimes of thy temporal affairs, by making thy* Will, *and ſetting all things in ſuch order as thou meaneſt finally to leave them in, and defer it not till thy ſickneſs grow more violent: For then perhaps thou ſhalt not have ſuch uſe of thy Reaſon as may fit thee for it; or if thou have, it will be then much more ſeaſonable to employ thy thoughts on higher things, on the world thou art going to, rather than that thou art about to leave; we cannot carry the things of this world with us when we go hence, and it is not fit we ſhould carry the thoughts of them. Therefore let thoſe be early diſpatched, that they may not diſturb thee at laſt.*

A Prayer for a Sick Perſon.

O Merciful and Righteous Lord, the God of health and of ſickneſs, of life and of death, I moſt unfeignedly acknowledge that my great abuſe of thoſe many days of ſtrength and welfare, which thou haſt afforded me, hath moſt juſtly deſerved thy preſent Viſitation. I deſire, O Lord, humbly to accept of this puniſhment of mine iniquity, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him. And, O Thou merciful Father, who deſigneſt not the ruine, but the amendment of thoſe whom thou ſcourgeſt, I beſeech thee by thy grace ſo to ſanctifie this correction of thine to me, that this ſickneſs of my body may be a means of health to my Soul; make me diligent to ſearch my heart, and do thou, O Lord, enable me to diſcover every accurſed thing how cloſely ſoever concealed there, that by the removal thereof, I may make way for the removal of this puniſhment. Heal my Soul, O Lord, which hath ſinned againſt thee; and then, if it be thy bleſſed will, heal my Body alſo: Reſtore the voice of joy and health unto my dwelling, that I may live to praiſe thee, and to bring forth fruits of repentance. But if in thy wiſdom thou haſt otherwiſe diſpoſed, if thou haſt determined that this ſickneſs ſhall be unto death, I beſeech thee to fit and prepare me for it: Give me that ſincere and earneſt repentance to which thou haſt promiſed mercy and pardon; wean my heart from the world, and all its fading vanities, and make me to gaſp and pant after thoſe more excellent and durable joys, which are at thy right hand for ever. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and in all the pains of my body, in all the agonies of my ſpirit, let thy comforts refreſh my Soul, and enable me patiently to wait till my change come. And grant, O Lord, that when my earthly houſe of this Tabernacle is diſſolved, I may have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; and that for his ſake, who by his precious bloud hath purchaſed it for me, even Jeſus Chriſt.

A Thanksgiving for Recovery.

O Gracious Lord, the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, in whoſe hand my time is, I praiſe and magnifie thee, that thou haſt in love to my Soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, and reſtored me to health again; it is thou alone, O Lord, that haſt preſerved my life from deſtruction, thou haſt chaſtened and corrected me, but thou haſt not given me over unto death. O let this life, which thou haſt thus graciouſly ſpared, be wholly conſecrated to thee. Behold O Lord, I am by thy mercy made whole, O make me ſtrictly careful to ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto me. Lord, let not this reprieve thou haſt now given me, make me ſecure, as thinking that my Lord delayeth his coming, but grant me, I beſeech thee, to make a right uſe of this long-ſuffering of thine, and ſo to employ every minute of that time thou ſhalt allow me, that when thou ſhalt appear, I may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before thee at thy coming. Lord, I have found by this approach towards death, how dreadful a thing it is to be taken unprepared; O let it be a perpetual admonition to me to watch for my Maſters coming. And when the pleaſures of ſin ſhall preſent themſelves to entice me, O make me to remember how bitter they will be at the laſt. O Lord, hear me, and as thou haſt in much mercy afforded me time, ſo grant me alſo grace to work out my own ſalvation, to provide oil in my Lamp, that when the Bridegroom cometh, I may go in with him to the Marriage. Grant this, I beſeech thee, for thy dear Sons ſake.

A Prayer at the approach of Death.

O Eternal and everliving God, who firſt breathedſt into man the breath of life, and when thou takeſt away that breath he dies and is turned again to his duſt, look with compaſſion on me thy poor creature who am now drawing near the gates of death, and, which is infinitely more terrible, the bar of Judgment. Lord, my own heart condemns me, and thou art infinitely greater than my heart, and knoweſt all things. The ſins I know and remember, fill me with horror; but there are alſo multitudes of others, which I either obſerved not at that time, or have ſince careleſly forgot, which are all preſent to thee. Thou ſetteſt my miſdeeds before thee, and my ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance; and to what a mountainous heap muſt the minutely provocations of ſo many years ariſe? How long ſhall one ſo ungodly ſtand in thy Judgment, or ſuch a ſinner in the Congregation of the Righteous? And to add yet more to my terror, my very repentance, I fear, will not abide the trial; my frequent relapſes heretofore have ſufficiently witneſſed the unſincerity of my paſt reſolutions. And then, O Lord, what can ſecure me that my preſent diſlikes of my ſins are not rather the effects of my amazing danger, than of any real change? And, O Lord, I know thou art not mocked, nor wilt accept of any thing that is not perfectly ſincere. O Lord, when I conſider this, fearfulneſs and trembling comes upon me, and an horrible dread overwhelmeth me; my fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and my heart is wounded within me. But, O Lord, one deep calleth upon another, the depth of my miſery upon the depth of thy mercy; Lord, ſave now, or I periſh eternally. O thou who willeſt not that any ſhould periſh, but that all would come to repentance, bring me, I beſeech thee, though thus late, to a ſincere Repentance, ſuch as thou wilt accept, who trieſt the heart. Create in me, O God, a clean heart, and renew a right

ſpirit within me. Lord, one day is with thee as a thouſand years. O let thy mighty Spirit work in me now in this my laſt day, whatſoever thou ſeeſt wanting to fit me for thy mercy and acceptation. Give me a perfect and entire hatred of my ſins, and enable me to preſent thee with that ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe; that by this I may be made capable of that atonement, which thy dear Son hath by the more excellent oblation of himſelf made for all repenting ſinners. He is the propitiation for our ſin, he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was on him; O heal me by his ſtripes, and let the cry of his bloud drown the clamour of my ſins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but he is the Son of thy love; for his ſake ſpare me, O Lord, ſpare thy creature, whom he hath redeemed with his moſt precious bloud, and be not angry with me for ever. In his wounds, O Lord, I take Sanctuary, O let not thy vengeance purſue me to this City of refuge: My Soul hangeth upon him, O let me not periſh with a Jeſus, with a Saviour in my arms. But by his Agony and bloudy Sweat; by his Croſs and Paſſion, by all that he did and ſuffered for ſinners, good Lord deliver me; deliver me, I beſeech thee, from the wages of my ſins, thy wrath and everlaſting damnation, in this time of my tribulation, in the hour of death, and in the day of Judgment. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, and do not now repay my former neglects of thy calls, by refuſing to anſwer me in this time of my greateſt need. Lord, there is but a ſtep between me and death, O let not my ſun go down upon thy wrath, but ſeal my pardon before I go hence and be no more ſeen. Thy loving kindneſs is better than the life it ſelf, O let me have that in exchange, and I ſhall moſt gladly lay down this mortal life. Lord, thou knoweſt all my deſire, and my groaning is not hid from thee; deal thou with me, O Lord, according to thy Name, for ſweet is thy mercy: Take away the ſting of death, the guilt of my ſins, and then though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death I will fear no evil; I will lay me down in peace, and Lord, when I awake up, let me be ſatisfied with thy preſence in thy glory. Grant this, merciful God, for his ſake, who is both the Redeemer and Mediator of ſinners, even Jeſus Chriſt.

PSALMS.

PUt me not to rebuke, O Lord, in thine anger, neither chaſten me in thy heavy diſpleaſure.

There is no health in my fleſh becauſe of thy diſpleaſure, neither is there any reſt in my bones, by reaſon of my ſins.

For my wickedneſſes are gone over my head, and are a ſore burden too heavy for me to bear.

My wounds ſtink and are corrupt through my fooliſhneſs.

Therefore is my ſpirit vexed within me, and my heart within me is deſolate.

My ſins have taken ſuch hold upon me, that I am not able to look up: yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.

But thou, O Lord God, art full of compaſſion and mercy, long-ſuffering, plenteous in goodneſs and truth.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am deſolate and in miſery.

If thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, O Lord, who may abide it?

O remember not the ſins and offences of my youth, but according to thy mercy think thou upon me for thy goodneſs.

Look upon my adverſity and miſery, and forgive me all my ſin.

Hide not thy face from thy ſervant, for I am in trouble, O haſte thee and hear me.

Out of the deep do I call unto thee, Lord, hear my voice.

Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my Soul, O ſave me for thy mercies ſake.

O go not from me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help.

I ſtretch forth my hands unto thee, my Soul gaſpeth unto thee, as a thirſty land.

Draw nigh unto my Soul and ſave it; O deliver me, becauſe of my enemies.

For my Soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto hell.

Save me from the Lions mouth, hear me from among the horns of the Unicorns.

O ſet me up upon the rock that is higher than I, for thou art my hope, and a ſtrong Tower for me againſt the enemy.

Why art thou ſo heavy, O my Soul, and why art thou ſo diſquieted within me?

Put thy truſt in God, for I will yet give him thanks for the help of his countenance.

The Lord ſhall make good his loving kindneſs towards me, yea, thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever, deſpiſe not thou the work of thine own hands.

O GOD, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee.

My Soul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh alſo longeth after thee in a barren and dry land, where no water is.

Like as the Hart deſireth the water-brook, ſo longeth my Soul after thee, O God.

My ſoul is a thirſt for God, even for the living God, when ſhall I come to appear before the preſence of God?

How amiable are thy dwellings, O Lord of Hoſts!

My Soul hath a deſire and longing to enter into the Courts of the Lord; my fleſh and my heart rejoyceth in the living God.

O that I had wings like a Dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt.

O ſend out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto thy holy Hill, and to thy dwelling.

For one day in thy Courts is better than a thouſand.

I had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedneſs.

I ſhould utterly have fainted, but that I believed verily to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.

Thou art my helper and my redeemer, O Lord, make no long tarrying.

EJACULATIONS.

O LORD, of whom may I ſeek for ſuccour but of thee, who for my ſins art juſtly diſpleaſed? Yet O Lord God moſt Holy, O Lord moſt Mighty, O Holy and moſt Merciful Saviour, deliver me not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Thou knoweſt, Lord, the ſecrets of my heart, ſhut not up thy merciful eyes to my prayer, but hear me, O Lord moſt Holy, O God moſt Mighty, O Holy and merciful Saviour, thou moſt worthy Judge eternal, ſuffer me not at my laſt hour for any pains of death to fall from thee.

Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy child; yet, O Lord, do not thou caſt off the bowels and compaſſions of a Father: But even as a Father pitieth his own children, ſo be thou merciful unto me.

Lord, the Prince of this world cometh, O let him have nothing in me, but as he accuſeth do thou abſolve; he lays many and grievous things to

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my charge, which he can too well prove; I have nothing to say for my self, do thou answer for me, O Lord my God.

O Lord, I am clothed with filthy garments, and Satan stands at my right hand to resist me; O be thou pleased to rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire, cause mine iniquities to pass from me, and clothe me with the righteousness of thy Son.

Behold, O God, the Devil is coming towards me, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. O save and deliver me, lest he devour my Soul like a Lion, and tear it in pieces while there is none to help.

O my God, I know that no unclean thing can enter into thy Kingdom, and I am nothing but pollution, my very righteousnesses are as filthy rags. O wash me, and make me white in the bloud of the Lamb, that so I may be fit to stand before thy Throne.

Lord, the snares of death compass me round about, O let not the pains of hell also take hold upon me, but though I find trouble and heaviness, yet, O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my Soul.

O dear Jesus, who hast bought me with the precious price of thine own bloud: Challenge now thy purchase, and let not the malice of Hell pluck me out of thy hand.

O blessed high Priest, who art able to save them to the utmost, who come unto God by thee, save me, I beseech thee, who have no hope, but on thy merits and intercession.

O God, I confess I have defaced that image of thine thou didst imprint upon my Soul; Yet, O thou faithful Creator, have pity on thy creature.

O Jesu, I have by my many and grievous sins crucified thee afresh, yet thou who prayedst for thy persecutors, intercede for me also, and suffer not, O my Redeemer, my Soul (the price of thy bloud) to perish.

O Spirit of grace, I have by my horrid impieties done despight to thee; yet, O Blessed Comforter, though I have often grieved thee, be thou pleased to succour and relieve me, and say unto my Soul, I am thy salvation.

Mine eyes look unto thee. O Lord, in thee is my trust, O cast not out my Soul.

O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

O Blessed Lord, who scourgest every Son whom thou receivest, let me not be weary of thy correction, but give me such a perfect subjection to thee the Father of Spirits, that this chastisement may be for my profit, that I may thereby be partaker of thy holiness.

O Thou Captain of my Salvation, who wert made perfect by sufferings, sanctifie to me all the pains of body, all the terrors of mind which thou shalt permit to fall upon me.

Lord, my sins have deserved eternal torments, make me chearfully and thankfully to bear my present pains, chasten me as thou pleasest here, that I may not be condemned with the world.

Lord, the waters are come in even unto my Soul. O let thy spirit move upon these waters, and make them like the pool of *Bethesda*, that they may cure whatsoever spiritual disease thou discernest in me.

O Christ, who first sufferedst many and grievous things, and then entredst into thy glory, make me so to suffer with thee, that I may also be glorified with thee.

O dear Jesus, who humbledst thy self to the death of the Cross for me, let that death of thine sweeten the bitterness of mine.

When

When thou hadſt overcome the ſharpneſs of death, thou didſt open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

I believe that thou ſhalt come to be my Judge.

I pray thee therefore help thy ſervant whom thou haſt redeemed with thy moſt precious bloud.

Make me to be numbred with thy Saints in glory everlaſting.

Thou art the Reſurrection and the life, he that believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live: Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.

My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better: Lord, I groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with that Houſe from Heaven.

I deſire to put off this my tabernacle. O be pleaſed to receive me into everlaſting habitations.

Bring my Soul out of Priſon, that I may give thanks unto thy name.

Lord, I am here to wreſtle, not only with fleſh and bloud, but with principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſs. O take me from theſe tents of *Kedar*, into the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, where Satan ſhall be utterly trodden under my feet.

I cannot here attend one minute to thy ſervice without diſtraction, O take me up to ſtand before thy Throne, where I ſhall ſerve thee day and night.

I am here in heavineſs through many tribulations, O receive me into that place of reſt, where all tears ſhall be wiped from my eyes, where there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying, nor pain.

I am here in the ſtate of baniſhment and abſence from the Lord. O take me where I ſhall for ever behold thy face, and follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth.

I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs.

O Bleſſed Jeſu, who haſt loved me, and waſhed me from my ſins in thine own bloud, receive my Soul.

Into thy hands I commend my Spirit, for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord thou God of truth. Come Lord Jeſu, come quickly.

PRAYERS *for their uſe, who Mourn in ſecret for the* PUBLICK CALAMITIES, *&c.*

PSALM 74.

O God wherefore art thou abſent from us ſo long: why is thy wrath ſo hot againſt the ſheep of thy paſture? &c.

Pſal. 79. *O God, the Heathen are come into thine inheritance: Thy holy Temple have they defiled, and made* Jeruſalem *an heap of ſtones,* &c.

Pſal. 80. *Hear, O thou ſhepherd of* Iſrael: *Thou that leadeſt* Joſeph *like a ſheep: Shew thy ſelf alſo, thou that ſitteſt upon the Cherubims,* &c.

A Prayer to be uſed in theſe times of Calamity.

O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, I deſire humbly to confeſs before thee, both on my own behalf, and that of this Nation, that theſe many years of calamity we have groaned under, are but the juſt,

juſt, (yea mild) returns of thoſe many more years of our provocations againſt thee, and that thy preſent wrath is but the due puniſhment of thy abuſed mercy. O Lord, thou haſt formerly abounded to us in bleſſings above all the people of the Earth. Thy candle ſhined upon our heads, and we delighted our ſelves in thy great goodneſs; Peace was within our walls, and plenteouſneſs within our Palaces; there was no decay, no leading into Captivity, and no complaining in our ſtreets: But we turned this Grace into wantonneſs, we abuſed our Peace to Security, our Plenty to Riot and Luxury, and made thoſe good things which ſhould have endeared our hearts to thee, the occaſion of eſtranging them from thee. Nay, O Lord, thou gaveſt us yet more precious mercies, thou wert pleaſed thy ſelf to pitch thy Tabernacle with us, to eſtabliſh a pure and glorious Church among us, and give us thy word to be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths: But, O Lord, we have made no other uſe of that light, than to conduct us to the chambers of death; we have dealt proudly, and not hearkned to thy Commandments, and by rebelling againſt the light, have purchaſed to our ſelves ſo much the heavier portion in the outer darkneſs. And now, O Lord, had the overflowings of thy vengeance been anſwerable to that of our ſin, we had long ſince been ſwept away with a ſwift deſtruction, and there had been none of us alive at this day, to implore thy mercy. But thou art a gracious God, ſlow to anger, and haſt proceeded with us with much patience and long-ſuffering, thou haſt ſent thy Judgments to awaken us to repentance, and haſt alſo allowed us ſpace for it: But alas! we have perverted this mercy of thine beyond all the former, we return not to him that ſmiteth us, neither do we ſeek the Lord; we are ſlidden back by a perpetual backſliding, no Man repenteth him of his wickedneſs, or ſaith, What have I done? 'Tis true indeed, we fear the rod, (we dread every ſuffering, ſo that we are ready to buy it off with the fouleſt ſin) but we fear not him that hath appointed it, but by a wretched obſtinacy harden our necks againſt thee, and refuſe to return. And now, O GOD, what balm is there in *Gilead* that can cure us, who when thou wouldſt heal us, will not be healed? We know thou haſt pronounced that there is no peace to the wicked, and how ſhall we then pray for peace, that ſtill retain our wickedneſs? This, this, O Lord, is our ſoreſt diſeaſe, O give us Medicines to heal this ſickneſs, heal our Souls and then we know thou canſt ſoon heal our Land. Lord, thou haſt long ſpoken by thy Word to our ears, by thy Judgments even to all our ſenſes, but unleſs thou ſpeak by thy ſpirit to our hearts, all other calls will ſtill be uneffectual. O ſend out this voice, and that a mighty voice, ſuch as may awake us out of this Lethargy: Thou that didſt call *Lazarus* out of the grave, O be pleaſed to call us who are Dead, yea, putrified in treſpaſſes and ſins, and make us to awake to righteouſneſs. And though, O Lord, our frequent reſiſtances even of thoſe inward Calls, have juſtly provoked thee to give us up to the luſts of our own heart; yet, O thou boundleſs Ocean of mercy, who art good not only beyond what we can deſerve, but what we can wiſh; do not withdraw the influence of thy grace, and take not thy holy Spirit from us. Thou wert found of thoſe that ſought thee not: O let that act of mercy be repeated to us who are ſo deſperately, yet ſo inſenſibly Sick; that we cannot ſo much as look after the Phyſician; and by how much our caſe is the more dangerous, ſo much the more ſovereign Remedies do thou apply. Lord, help us, and conſider not ſo much our unworthineſs of thy aid, as our irremediable ruine, if we want it; ſave Lord, or we periſh eternally. To this end diſpenſe to us in our temporal Intereſt

what

what thou ſeeſt may beſt ſecure our ſpiritual; if a greater degree of outward miſery will tend to the curing our inward, Lord, ſpare not thy Rod, but ſtrike yet more ſharply. Caſt out this Devil, though with never ſo much foaming and tearing. But if thou ſeeſt that ſome Return of mercy may be moſt likely to melt us, O be pleaſed ſo far to condeſcend to our wretchedneſs, as to afford us that, and, whether by thy ſharper or thy gentler methods, bring us home to thy ſelf. And then, O Lord, we know thy hand is not ſhortned, that it cannot ſave: When thou haſt delivered us from our ſins, thou canſt and wilt deliver us from our troubles. O ſhew us thy mercy, and grant us thy ſalvation, that being redeemed both in our bodies and ſpirits, we may glorifie thee in both, in a chearful obedience, and praiſe the Name of our God, that hath dealt wonderfully with us through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A Prayer for This Church.

O Thou great God of Recompences, who turneſt a fruitful Land into Barrenneſs for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein; thou haſt moſt juſtly executed that Fatal Sentence on This Church, which having once been the perfection of Beauty, the joy of the whole Earth, is now become a ſcorn and deriſion to all that are round about her, O Lord, what could have been done to thy Vineyard that thou haſt not done in it? And ſince it hath brought forth nothing but wild grapes, it is perfectly juſt with thee to take away the hedge thereof, and let it be eaten up. But, O Lord, though our iniquities teſtifie againſt us, yet do thou it for thy Names ſake; for our backſlidings are many, we have ſinned againſt thee. O the hope of *Iſrael* the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the Land, as a way-faring Man that turneth aſide to tarry for a night? Why ſhouldeſt thou be as a Man aſtonied? as a mighty man that cannot ſave? Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not; deprive us of what outward enjoyment thou pleaſeſt, take from us the opportunities of our luxury, and it may be a mercy; but O take not from us the means of our Reformation, for that is the moſt direful expreſſion of thy wrath. And though we have hated the Light, becauſe our deeds were evil, yet, O Lord, do not by withdrawing it condemn us to walk on ſtill in darkneſs, but let it continue to ſhine till it have guided our feet into the way of peace. O Lord, ariſe, ſtir up thy ſtrength and come and help, and deliver not the Soul of thy Turtle Dove [*This diſconſolate Church*] unto the multitude of the Enemy, but help her, O God, and that right early. But if, O Lord, our rebellions have ſo provoked thee, that the *Ark muſt wander in the Wilderneſs till all this murmuring Generation be conſumed*, yet let not that periſh with us, but bring it at laſt into a *Canaan*, and *let our more innocent Poſterity ſee that which in thy juſt judgment thou denieſt to us.* In the mean time let us not ceaſe to bewail that deſolation our ſins have wrought, to think upon the ſtones of *Sion*, and pity to ſee her in the duſt, nor ever be aſhamed or afraid to own her in her loweſt and moſt perſecuted Condition, but eſteem the Reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the Treaſures of *Egypt*, and ſo approve our conſtancy to this our afflicted Mother, that her bleſſed Lord and head may own us with mercy when he ſhall come in the glory of thee his Father with the holy Angels. Grant this, merciful Lord, for the ſame Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.

A Prayer

A Prayer for the peace of the Church.

LORD Jeſus Chriſt, which of thine Almightineſs madeſt all creatures both viſible and inviſible, which of thy Godly wiſdom governeſt and ſetteſt all things in moſt goodly order, which of thine unſpeakable goodneſs keepeſt, defendeſt and furthereſt all things, which of thy deep mercy reſtoreſt the decayed, reneweſt the fallen, raiſeſt the dead; vouchſafe, we pray thee, at laſt to caſt down thy countenance upon thy well-beloved Spouſe the Church, but let it be that amiable and merciful countenance wherewith thou pacifieſt all things in Heaven, in Earth, and whatſoever is above Heaven and under the Earth: Vouchſafe to caſt upon us thoſe tender and pitiful eyes with which thou didſt once behold *Peter* that great Shepherd of thy Church, and forthwith he remembred himſelf and repented; with which eyes thou once didſt view the ſcattered Multitude, and wert moved with compaſſion, that for lack of a good Shepherd they wandred as Sheep diſperſed and ſtrayed aſunder. Thou ſeeſt (O good Shepherd) what ſundry ſorts of Wolves have broken into thy ſheep-coats; ſo that if it were poſſible the very perfect perſons ſhould be brought into error: Thou ſeeſt with what Winds, with what Waves, with what Storms thy ſilly ſhip is toſſed, thy ſhip wherein thy little flock is in peril to be drowned. And what is now left but that it utterly ſink and we all periſh? Of this tempeſt and ſtorm we may thank our own wickedneſs and ſinful living, we diſcern it well and confeſs it; we diſcern thy Righteouſneſs, and we bewail our unrighteouſneſs: But we appeal to thy mercy which ſurmounteth all thy works; we have now ſuffered much puniſhment, being ſcourged with ſo many Wars, conſumed with ſuch Loſſes of goods, ſhaken with ſo many Flouds, and yet appears there no where any Haven or Port unto us: being thus tired and forlorn among ſo ſtrange evils, but ſtill every day more grievous puniſhments and more ſeem to hang over our heads, we complain not of thy ſharpneſs, moſt tender Saviour, but we diſcern here alſo thy mercy foraſmuch as much grievouſer plagues we have deſerved. But O moſt merciful Jeſus, we beſeech thee that thou wilt not conſider nor weigh what is due for our deſervings, but rather what becometh thy mercy, without which neither the Angels in Heaven can ſtand ſure before thee, much leſs we ſilly veſſels of clay. Have mercy on us, O Redeemer, which art eaſie to be intreated, not that we be worthy of thy mercy, but give thou this glory unto thine own Name. Suffer not thoſe which either have not known thee, or do envy thy glory, continually to triumph over us, and ſay, Where is their God, where is their Redeemer, where is their Saviour, where is their Bridegroom, that they thus boaſt on? Theſe opprobrious words redound unto thee, O Lord; while by our evils men weigh and eſteem thy Goodneſs: They think we be forſaken, whom they ſee not amended. Once when thou ſlepſt in the ſhip, and a Tempeſt ſuddenly ariſing threatned death to all in the ſhip, thou awokeſt at the out-cry of a few Diſciples, and ſtraightway at thine Almighty word the Waters couched, the Winds fell, the Storm was ſuddenly turned into a great calm; the dumb waters knew their Makers voice. Now in this far greater Tempeſt, wherein not a few mens bodies be in danger, but innumerable Souls, we beſeech thee at the cry of thy holy Church which is in danger of drowning, that thou wilt awake. So many thouſands of men do cry, *Lord ſave us, we periſh*, the Tempeſt is paſt mans power; it is thy word that muſt do the deed, Lord Jeſu, only ſay thou with a word

of thy mouth, *Ceaſe, O Tempeſt, and forthwith ſhall the deſired calm appear.* Thou wouldſt have ſpared ſo many thouſands of moſt wicked men, if in the City of *Sodom* had been found but ten good men. Now here be ſo many thouſands of men which love the glory of thy Name, which ſigh for the beauty of thy houſe, and wilt thou not at theſe mens Prayers let go thine Anger, and remember thine accuſtomed and old mercies? Shalt thou not with thy heavenly policy turn our folly into thy glory? Shalt thou not turn the wicked mens evils into thy Churches good? For thy mercy is wont then moſt of all to ſuccour, when the thing is with us paſt Remedy, and neither the might nor wiſdom of men can help it. Thou alone bringeſt things that be never ſo out of order into order again, which art the only author and maintainer of Peace. Thou framedſt that old Confuſion wherein without order, without faſhion confuſedly lay the diſcordant ſeeds of things, and with a wonderful order the things of that nature fought together, thou didſt allay and knit in a perpetual band. But how much greater Confuſion is this, where is no Charity, no Fidelity, no bonds of Love, no reverence neither of Laws nor yet of Rulers, no agreement of Opinions, but as it were in a miſordered Quire, every man ſingeth a contrary note! Among the heavenly Planets is no diſſention, the Elements keep their place, every one do the office whereunto they be appointed: And wilt thou ſuffer thy Spouſe, for whoſe ſake all things were made, thus by continual diſcords to periſh? Shalt thou ſuffer the wicked Spirits, which be authors and workers of diſcord, to bear ſuch a ſwing in thy Kingdom uncheck'd? Shalt thou ſuffer the ſtrong Captain of miſchief, whom thou once overthreweſt, again to invade thy Tents, and to ſpoil thy Souldiers? When thou wert here a man converſant among men, at thy Voice fled the Devils. Send forth we beſeech thee, O Lord, thy Spirit, which may drive away out of the breaſts of all them that profeſs thy Name, the wicked Spirits, maſters of riot, of covetouſneſs, of vain glory, of carnal luſt, of miſchief and diſcord. *Create in us, O our God and King, a clean heart, and renew thy holy Spirit in our breaſts, pluck not from us thy holy Ghoſt. Render unto us the joy of thy ſaving health, and with thy principal Spirit, ſtrengthen thy Spouſe and the Herdmen thereof.* By this Spirit thou reconciledſt the Earthly to the Heavenly: By this thou didſt frame and reduce ſo many Tongues, ſo many Nations, ſo many ſundry ſorts of men into one body of a Church, which body by the ſame Spirit is knit to thee their Head. This Spirit if thou wilt vouchſafe to renew in all mens hearts, then ſhall all theſe foreign miſeries ceaſe, or if they ceaſe not, they ſhall turn to the profit and avail of them which love thee. Stay this Confuſion, ſet in order this horrible Chaos (O Lord Jeſus) let thy Spirit ſtretch out it ſelf upon theſe waters of evil wavering Opinions. And becauſe thy Spirit, which according to thy Prophets ſaying, *containeth all things*, hath alſo the Science of ſpeaking; make, that like as unto all them which be of thy Houſe is one Light, one Baptiſm, one God, one Hope, one Spirit, ſo they may alſo have one Voice, one Note, one Song, profeſſing one Catholick truth. When thou didſt mount up to Heaven triumphantly, thou threweſt out from above, thy precious things, thou gaveſt gifts among men, thou dealteſt ſundry rewards of thy Spirit. Renew again from above thy old bountifulneſs, give that thing to thy Church, now fainting and growing downward, that thou gaveſt unto her ſhooting up, at her firſt beginning. Give unto Princes and Rulers the grace ſo to ſtand in awe of thee, that they ſo may guide the Common-weal, as they ſhould ſhortly render account unto thee that art the King of Kings. Give wiſ-

dom

dom to be always aſſiſtant unto them, that whatſoever is beſt to be done, they may eſpie it in their minds, and purſue the ſame in their doings. Give to the Biſhops the gift of prophecy, that they may declare and interpret holy Scripture, not of their own brain, but of thine inſpiring. Give them the threefold Charity which thou once demandedſt of *Peter*, what time thou didſt betake unto him the charge of thy ſheep. Give to the Prieſt the love of Soberneſs and of Chaſtity. Give to thy people a good will to follow thy Commandments, and a readineſs to obey ſuch perſons as thou haſt appointed over them. So ſhall it come to paſs, if through thy gift thy Princes ſhall command that thou requireſt, if thy Paſtors and Herdmen ſhall teach the ſame, and thy people obey them both, that the old dignity and tranquillity of the Church ſhall return again with a goodly order unto the glory of thy Name. Thou ſparedſt the *Ninevites* appointed to be deſtroyed, as ſoon as they converted to repentance, and wilt thou deſpiſe thy Houſe falling down at thy feet, which inſtead of Sackcloth hath ſighs, and inſtead of aſhes tears? Thou promiſeſt forgiveneſs to ſuch as turn unto thee, but this ſelf thing is thy Gift, a man to turn with his whole heart unto thee, to the intent all our goodneſs ſhould redound unto thy glory. Thou art the Maker, repair the work that thou haſt faſhioned. Thou art the Redeemer, ſave that thou haſt bought. Thou art the Saviour, ſuffer not them to periſh which do hang on thee. Thou art the Lord and owner, challenge thy poſſeſſion. Thou art the Head, help thy members. Thou art the King, give us a reverence of thy Laws. Thou art the Prince of Peace, breath upon us brotherly love. Thou art the God, have pity on thy humble beſeechers, be thou according to *Pauls* ſaying, all things in all men, to the intent the whole quire of thy Church with agreeing minds and conſonant voices for mercy obtained at thy hands, may give thanks unto the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; which after the moſt perfect example of concord be diſtinguiſhed in property of Perſons and one in nature: To whom be praiſe and glory Eternally. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Kings Majeſty, out of the *Liber Regalis.*

GOD the unſpeakable Author of the world, Creator of men, Governour of Empires, and eſtabliſher of all Kingdoms, who out of the loins of our Father Abraham *didſt chuſe a King that became the Saviour of all Kings and Nations of the Earth; Bleſs, we beſeech thee, thy faithful Servant, and our dread Soveraign Lord, King* CHARLES, *with the richeſt bleſſings of thy Grace. Eſtabliſh him in the Throne of his Kingdom by thy mighty aid and protection; Viſit him as thou didſt viſit* Moſes *in the Buſh,* Joſhua *in the Battle,* Gideon *in the field, and* Samuel *in the Temple. Let the Dew of thine abundant mercies fall upon his head, and give him the bleſſing of* David *and* Solomon. *Be unto him an Helmet of Salvation againſt the face of his Enemies, and a ſtrong Tower of defence in the time of adverſity. Let his Reign be proſperous, and his days many. Let peace, and love, and holineſs, let juſtice, and truth, and all Chriſtian vertues flouriſh in his time. Let his people ſerve him with honour and obedience: And let him ſo duly ſerve thee here on Earth, that he may hereafter everlaſtingly reign with thee in Heaven, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

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FINIS.

THE CAUSES OF THE Decay of Christian Piety.

OR AN

IMPARTIAL SURVEY

Of the Ruines of

Christian Religion,

UNDERMIN'D BY

UNCHRISTIAN PRACTICE.

Written by the Author of

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

LONDON,

Printed by *Roger Norton*, for *Robert Pawlet*, at the Sign of the Bible in *Chancery-Lane*, near *Fleetstreet*, 1683.

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THE PREFACE.

1. THOUGH this be the first appearance this Tract has made in the world, yet its Being is of somewhat a more ancient date; it having received its lineaments and perfect form some years since: When the Author not having partiality enough to think it worthy publick view; had judg'd it, if not to perpetual darkness, yet at least to a long indefinite suspension from seeing light. In this interval, 'tis more than probable some passages may have lost much of their propriety to the present state of affairs, they having been adapted to circumstances which may since have received some change: And herein I must bespeak the Readers candor, to make such allowances as the matter shall require; of which yet I suppose there will not occur very many, or very important occasions. The time of writing this Treatise.

2. But would God I were to Apologize for a yet far greater absurdity, that our scene were so shifted, that the whole design of the ensuing discourse might become one entire impertinence, and that our more eminent conformity to the rules of our Christian institution, might supersede these disquisitions about our failances and aberrations. But alas, I find I have pitcht upon a subject not like to be outdated; vice daily gaining not only strength but impudence: Nay, we are not only become witnesses against our selves, by declaring our Sin as Sodom, but we have forced God also to attest against us by punishing us in a manner no less conspicuous and manifest. And surely then 'tis more than time for us to take the Prophets advice, Hag. 1. 7. to consider our ways, to reflect not only on those robust gyant-like provocations which have thus bid defiance to Heaven; but also to sift out those secret incendiaries that have inflamed us to this mad daring; to examine what that חמר, that inflamable bitumen, the untemper'd morter is with which we build our Babel, by discovering those misperswasions and false confidences, wherein many of our other guilts are founded: In order to which this slight Tract offers its feeble, yet well-meant aids; being forced out of its retirement, and like Crœsus his dumb Son, compell'd to speak by impulse of the present exigent: And how despicable soever the Mite contributed be in it self, yet if it may provoke the more wealthy to cast in richer gifts, it may prove no unprofitable agent for the Corban. 'Tis evident this is a season which not only warrants, but exacts the most importunate endeavours of perswading men to those things that belong to their Peace. The occasion of publishing it.

3. For although 'tis true, that every state of sin sets us also in a state of hostility with God, yet our present condition seems to have advanced us beyond the common degrees even of that. 'Tis, we know, high insolence against a Prince to despise and violate his laws, but when to that are superadded contumelies, and design'd affronts to his person, this is such an accumulated out-rage, as will vanquish the most resolv'd Patience. And this alas, appears to be our case: We have long indulg'd to our selves the breach of all Divine laws, gratified every appetite, every passion and lust with the forfeiture of our allegiance, and as if this would not serve to render us irreconcileable enough to God, we are now grown to subjoyn malice to licentiousness; project not so much to please our selves, as to displease Him; profess Sins of this Age aggravated, from the

profeſs a contempt not only of his commands, but himſelf; and ſeek no leſs to dethrone Him, than abrogate thoſe. Thus have we made it a kind of perſonal quarrel, and by thoſe impious blaſphemies we daily dart againſt Heaven, do, as it were, dare the Divine Majeſty to vindicate it ſelf. Whether his great longanimity may have given our Hectors *a fancy, that they had vapour'd God (as they are us'd to do men) into a tameneſs, I ſhall not examine: But his late proceedings with us ſufficiently teſtifie that he means no longer to decline our challenge. He now appears to avow the enmity as openly as we have done; and has already given us competent eſſays, how* fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, *Heb.* 10. 31.

greatneſs of our judgments.

4. *'Tis true indeed that he has formerly own'd his controverſie with our Land, and by a long ſeries of great and heavy calamities atteſted himſelf the* God to whom vengeance belongeth, Pſal. 94. 1. *Yet as great Monarchs uſe to quell leſſer inſurrections by their Lieutenants, and ſubordinate Officers, but when the rebellion grows high and deſperate, then to encounter it in their own perſons; ſo is it here obſervable that God then Chaſtiſed, and tried to reduce us by inferior inſtruments, found us out* Lictors *among our ſelves, and made one mans ſin the puniſhment of anothers: But now as if he had the ſame jealouſie for his honour which* Joab *had at the ſiege of* Rabba *for* Davids, 2 Sam. 12. 28. *as if he fear'd to be rival'd in the glory of our ruine, he takes us in his own hand, marks us out, as he did* Pharaoh, *to be the Trophies of his own peculiar vengeance, appearing ſignally againſt us in all the dreadful ſolemnities of an enraged enemy.*

Particular inſtances thereof, firſt of the Plague;

5. *For firſt, has he not as* Moſes *ſpeaks,* Deut. 32. 41. *whet his glittering* Sword? *Nay, has he not moreover (in the Scripture ſtile) made it drunk with bloud? by ſweeping away multitudes of us in a raging* PESTILENCE, *which Marcht from one part of the Nation to another in a kind of Triumphant progreſs, as if it had receiv'd the ſame mandate God gave* Abraham, *Gen.* 13. 17. Ariſe, walk through the land, in the length thereof, and in the breadth thereof, for unto thee will I give it. *Whether it may not thus fatally complete its courſe, notwithſtanding the halt it ſeems to make, and paſs from our* Dan *to our* Beerſheba, *is a queſtion that can with no probability be reſolv'd in the negative; for as it is not to be doubted but there were in* Judea *as great ſinners as thoſe on whom the Tower of* Siloam *fell,* Luke 13. *that thoſe who have hitherto eſcaped have an equal ſhare in the provoking cauſe of the Judgment: So alſo that great* unſenſibleneſs *many of us ſhew of what others groan under, is a very ominous abode, it being not only a dangerous ſymptome, but a probable means of drawing that calamity to our ſelves. When God ſees we will ſuffer nothing by way of conſent and ſympathy with others, 'tis but equal we have our part in a more direct and immediate infliction, and feel what we would not compaſſionate.* Thucydides *mentions it as the effect of the great Plague at* Athens, *that it had extinguiſht humanity; brought in a kind of ferity and barbarouſneſs among them, rendring them openly villanous to man, and blaſphemous againſt God;* θεῶν φόβος ἢ ἀνθρώπων νόμος οὐδεὶς ἀπεῖργε, *there was no reſtraint of law or religion, one part being deſperate upon proſpect of their danger, the other preſumptuous upon the contemplation of their Eſcape; and ſure if we look impartially, ours will appear to have had ſomewhat of the ſame operation. Thoſe compaſſions which the novelty it ſeems at firſt gave us to ſufferers in this kind, ſeems now quite extinct; ſo unconcerned are we grown to every thing that touches us not in our individuals, as if we owned no relation to the* ſpecies *of mankind, though backt alſo with that cloſer tye, which the ſpiritual conſanguinity has ſuperadded. A pregnant indication of this may, I doubt not, be collected (as from many other circumſtances, ſo particularly) from the great haſte has in many places been made, to lay aſide thoſe publick* Humiliations *and Interceſſions which were recommended to us, as well by the command of*

Authority,

Authority, as the common diſtreſs; but have been caſt off without the ſubſtraction of either of thoſe motives. Whether we are duly mindful of the afflictions of Joſeph, *that cannot afford one day in a month for a ſolemn reflection on them, I muſt leave to every mans conſcience to diſcuſs. But ſure we are no leſs wanting to our ſelves than them in this neglect; the office being no leſs deſigned for Antidote than cure, to prevent the judgment where it is not, than to remove it where it is: And if we will neither deprecate on our own behalfs, nor intercede on others; we are ſure as improvident, as uncharitable, and may juſtly expect the fatal event of both.*

6. *In the interim, although the preſent reſpite from deſtruction, and our own deceitful hearts flatter us, and ſay Peace, Peace; we have all reaſon to conclude that God is not attoned, the quarrel and hoſtility goes on, and his* hand is ſtretched out ſtill, Eſ. 5. 25. *And ſo indeed we find it in other diſmal events. Slaughter we know is not the only effect of War; which as it deſtroys the lives of many, blaſts the ſupports and Joys of more. This conſequence of hoſtility we find well expreſt by the Prophet,* Joel 2. 3. The land is as the Garden of *Eden* before them, and behind them a deſolate wilderneſs, *and herein alſo hath the Lord of Hoſts, the great God of battel ſhewed himſelf mighty againſt us, he has invaded us not only with Sword, but FIRE: And in ſo ſtupendious manner deſolated the glory of our Land, that no humane fury could have procured, or even have wiſht the like vaſtation and ruines.* That City which was great among the Nations, and Princeſs among the Provinces, *Lam.* 1. 1. lies buried in her own Aſhes, *and is both Funeral-pile and Urn to her ſelf; and what neither foreign nor domeſtick enemies could in a ſucceſſion of many ages effect, one blaſt of the breath of his diſpleaſure,* Pſal. 18. *has performed in a moment. So verifying even in a literal ſence the Apoſtles affirmation,* Heb. 12. 29. that our God is a conſuming fire. Plutarch *tells us when* Fabius *ſackt* Tarentum, *he took not away their Images, but ſaid,* ἀπολείπομεν τὸς θεὸς Ταραντίνοις κεχολωμένους, Let us leave the *Tarentines* their Gods that are offended with them. *'Tis our Calamity to be ſignally under the indignation of our incenſed God, which in that great Captains judgment was ſomewhat more dreadful than the worſt inſtictions of War: For what induſtry ſoever has been uſed to entitle either the negligence or deſigns of men unto our overthrow, yet ſure never any judgment had more legible marks of Gods immediate hand: Such as ſhew he meant to revenge the abuſe of his former gentle methods: That thoſe who would not be reformed by the ſlighter corrections wherein he dallied with them, might find* a judgment worthy of God, Wiſd. 12. 26. *And ſure ſuch was this, which both for its greatneſs and irreſiſtibleneſs does well own its Author, and ſhews his wrath was accended to a very exceſſive heat, that thus poured out it ſelf not only like, but in Fire,* Lam. 2. 4.

Secondly, of the Fire:

7. *I ſhall not here aſſume the Politicians part, and weigh the detriment we have ſuſtained by it in our civil intereſt, of which perhaps nothing but time and experience can give us a full eſtimate; It rather ſuits my deſign to obſerve what relates to our ſpiritual concerns, whilſt Gods* dwelling places *were involved in the ſame ruine with ours; his own peculiar portion not exempted, but as the Prophet complains,* Eſ. 64. 11. Our holy and beautiful houſes where our Fathers praiſed him are burnt with fire: *This, though perhaps leaſt conſidered, is ſure not the leaſt ſad circumſtance, had only the ſcenes of our luxury, or our fraud been deſtroyed, it might have ſent us with more fervency to the places of our devotion, and we might have frequented Gods houſes the better, for being deſtitute of our own; but when theſe alſo are made parts of the common heap, 'tis a ſad teſtimonial that our very Religion was provoking; That that pageant-like piety which we depoſited in our CHURCHES, only to make a ſhew with on Holy-days, ſerved only to defile thoſe holy places, and render them ſo polluted, as required no*

The burning down of our Churches;

ſlighter

ſlighter purgation than that of FIRE. *'Tis, we know, not long, ſince thoſe manſions ſacred to the Prince of Peace, were even in the vulgar obvious ſence, made magazines for War; but yet more ſo in reference to that Pulpit-wild-fire, which ſet the Nation in combuſtion; whether that ſtrange Fire which ſome of our* Nadabs *and* Abihu's *introduced there, may not, (even at this diſtance) have done its part to the drawing down this* FIRE *from Heaven, I leave to their ſerious reflection. But neither the* Hypocrite *nor the* Seditious *muſt ingroſs the guilt of this ruine: The* Atheiſt *vyes with both; for alas, what ſhould God do with Temples among thoſe, who pay him no worſhip? Or why ſhould he let thoſe ſacred monuments remain among them, to whom all memorials of him ſerve but as occaſions, and incentives to blaſpheme him? They have long ſaid with thoſe in* Job, Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways; *and now 'tis but equitable (I had almoſt ſaid* Civil*) to take them at their word, and no longer reſide among thoſe who avowedly diſclaim him.*

God's withdrawing his gracious Preſence from us, which is oft followed by

8. *And this, 'tis much to be feared, may be the portent of this diſmal vaſtation: We know men uſe not to deface thoſe houſes, where they intend to inhabit; And ſure* this abhorring his Sanctuary, *and* caſting off his Altar, Lam. 2. *is a dreadful ſign, that he means no longer to continue his reſidence among us; indeed we find in Scripture that his promiſe of cohabiting is always limited to thoſe who own themſelves his people; and therefore when ſo many of us have openly renounced that relation, we can with no juſtice expect the bleſſing appendant to it.*

Temporal calamities, and

9. *But perhaps this will ſeem to ſuch no formidable thing; Gods ſo withdrawing of himſelf is but agreeable to their wiſhes, a kind of quitting the field to them, and ſo rather matter of complacency than regret: But 'tis to be conſidered that there is another preſence of God that will infallibly ſucceed this; when he removes that of his grace, 'tis to make way for that of his anger; like the* Philiſtines, *we ſhall know the God of* Iſrael *is among us by his Plagues,* 1 Sam. 5. *or to make a yet more dreadful compariſon, we ſhall, like the damned in Hell, diſcern his preſence only in the punitive effects of it, and read his nearneſs in our ſufferings. And ſure this will be but an ill exchange, even to the profaneſt of us, thoſe that have moſt deſpiſed or loathed the ſoft breathings of his Word and Spirit; will find it yet harder to endure the whirlwinds of his wrath, which will ſnatch from us thoſe ſecular advantages for whoſe purſuit we have neglected* the better part, Luke 10. 42. *and leave us as little of worldly enjoyments, as we deſired to have of ſpiritual.*

Spiritual ſecurity.

10. *Of this our late Calamities have given us a ſad* Præludium, *and God knows how ſoon we may ſee the laſt ſcene of the fatal Tragedy, it being too probable that this is Gods laſt Experiment upon us, like the Cauſticks and Scarifyings to a Lethargick Patient; if this bring us not to ſenſe, we are like to ſleep on to deſtruction: And alas, what uncomfortable ſymptomes appear even in this point alſo! Who is there that (unleſs awakened by his perſonal concernments) ſeems at all to ſtartle at the noiſe of publick ruine? When God in diſpleaſure threatned the* Iſraelites *that he would remit their conduct to his* Angel, *and not go himſelf with them. The Text ſays,* They mourned and no man put on his ornaments on him, *Exod.* 33. 4. *or as the* LXX, κατεπένθησεν ὁ πενθικοῖς *and the Syriack,* ‖ حمحه حجز اسلاه حكحاص They ſtript themſelves of their Armour, their ruffling garb of War, and appeared in the penitential dreſs of ſackcloth and aſhes: *But now that we are given up not to a conducting but deſtroying Angel, what ſigns of remorſe do we ſhew? What vanity (I fear I may ask what vice) have we ſubſtracted, upon the ſenſe of Gods anger? What nicety in cloaths or diet have we cut off in ſympathy with the nakedneſs and hunger of our afflicted brethren? Nay, do not the unreaſonable Jollities of too many among us, look as if we triumpht in their miſeries, found Muſick in the diſcordant ſounds of their*

groans,

groans, and our own laughter; and emulated that infamous barbarity of Nero, *who played while* Rome *burned? 'Tis mentioned by the Prophet as a most preposterous thing, a kind of impious Solecism to revel under the menace of judgments.* Thus saith the Lord, a sword, a sword, it is sharpned to make a sore slaughter, it is furbished that it may glitter, *should we then make mirth?* Ezek. 21. 9, 10. *and certainly it less befits us against whom God has not only prepared, but used his sword; who are not only under the threats, but actual Execution of his vengeance: And what is it but interpretatively to prompt him to yet sharper inflictions, by shewing him that these have not edge enough to penetrate us? With how much indignation God resents this perverse, this contumelious behaviour, we may read,* Esay 22. 12, 13, 14. In that day did the Lord call to weeping, and mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, and behold joy and gladness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine; eating and drinking for to morrow we shall dye: *Upon which follows that severe denunciation:* Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you dye. *Of so deep a tincture is this guilt, that 'tis as lasting as our lives, and like the fretting* leprosie *in the house,* Levit. 14. 45. *can be removed by nothing but its dissolution.*

The Conclusion, an Admonition to Repentance.

11. *O then let us not add this to the heap of our other provocations, mistake impudence or desperation for courage; and frantickly defie that omnipotence which we are sure we cannot resist: But since it has pleased God even in wrath to remember mercy, let us transcribe his Copy, be as kind to our selves as he has been to us, and stop in our career as he has done in his; not so madly affect a full parallel with* Sodom *and* Gomorrha, *as to force him to destroy that remnant,* Es. 1. 9. *which alone distinguishes our case: But rather take pattern from* Nineveh; *cry, and* cry mightily to God, *joyn humiliation to our prayers, and reformation to both. And could we be perswaded to do this with the same sincerity, and universality, we might hope it may be with the same success also: Would every one who has contributed to the accending, as industriously contribute to the appeasing of Gods wrath: Would all who have brought their fire-brands bring also their tears to quench them; as there would be no dry Eyes in the Nation at the present, so might it prevent as great a Generality of weeping ones for the future; secure us such a tranquillity here, as may calmly convoy us to that impassible state,* where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, where there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, *Rev.* 21. 4.

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THE

THE CAUSES OF THE Decay of Christian Piety.

CHAP. I.

The Character of Christian Religion, demonstrating its aptitude to plant exemplary Vertue and Sanctity.

1. THE holy *Psalmist* gives it as part of the Character of Pious persons, and there-withal a description of their felicity, *Psal.* 92. 13. *That they shall bring forth more fruit in their Age*: And what he thus observes of the members disjunctively and apart, reason suggests to be in a higher and more eminent manner appliable to the whole body united: And it being as well the mark as duty of every single Christian *to grow in grace*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. we may by all rules of Proportion conclude, that the collective masse of such, the whole Church is by this time near *attained to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, *Eph.* 4. 3. And indeed this is so regular an inference, that whilst the Premisses stand firm, 'tis impossible to shake the Conclusion, the entire Body must necessarily augment answerably to the growth of its several parts. And if we should so far let loose to speculation, as to forget our experience, if we measure the effect only by the power and energy of the cause, we should surely be as far from doubting the premisses also. Christianity is in it self of so prolifick a nature, so apt to impregnate the hearts and lives of its proselytes, that it is hard to imagine, that any branch should want a due fertility that is engrafted into so vigorous a stock.

Christian Piety ought to improve in proportion to the time of its growth.

2. For first, in its spring and original it is most supernatural and divine, derived immediately from him, who had nothing more of man than he purposely assumed to draw us the nearer to him as God. He it was that disseminated this doctrine, and that in order to the *purifying to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*; and certainly his choice abundantly justifies its propriety to that end, and his descent from Heaven on that errand puts so venerable a solemnity upon it, that though his descent were very astonishing, yet it will be much more so, that it should fail of the designed effect.

Advantag'd by its divine originals.

3. And indeed did our Faith give us no clue to lead us to the Author, yet its composition would speak it to be of no humane extraction, its precepts are so excellent and refined, so agreeable to the more spiritual part of our temper, and so apt, as to forestal, so to cleanse and sublimate the more gross and corrupt, as shews flesh and bloud never revealed it. Nay farther, so effectually providing for all those advantages to mankind, which the wisest of mens laws have in vain attempted, that methinks they all stand before it like the *Magicians* before *Moses*, and by their impotence ta-

By its excellent Precepts.

citly confess it to be the finger of God. 'Twere too large a Theme to confront them in the several instances, let it suffice to observe one which has a common influence on all; and that is the immaculate *cleanness* of heart, which Christs, and only Christs law requires. This is the only proper *basis* on which to superstruct, first *innocency*, and then *vertue*, and without this the most rigid exactors of outward purity, do but transcribe the folly of him, who pumps very laboriously in a Ship, yet neglects to stop the Leak: Or the worse tyranny of *Pharaoh*, in *requiring Brick without Straw:* So far is it from a severity in our law-giver, thus to limit and restrain our thoughts, that it is an act of the greatest indulgence: By no means the laying on a new burden, but the furnishing us with an Engine to bear with ease that weight which otherwise the stoutest *Atlas* must sink under. And were but this one precept sincerely conformed to, it would not only facilitate but ascertain the obedience to all the rest. If the *first sparks* of ill were quencht within, what possibility is there they should ever break out into a flame? How shall he *kill* that dares not be angry? be *Adulterous* in act, that did not first transgress in his desire? How shall he be *perjured* that fears an oath? or *defraud* that permits not himself to covet? In the like manner all *positive acts* of vertue are but the natural effects of the interior habit. Where the love of God is seated in the Heart, 'twill operate in all the faculties, keep them in a busie endeavour of doing acceptable service: when *fear* is planted there, it will break forth into outward reverence and duty; and so proportionable 'twill be in every other instance. 'Tis therefore an advice well becoming the wisdom of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 4. *To keep the heart with all diligence:* But then it is withal the work of him who is greater than *Solomon*, to teach us how to do this: For *unless he keep that City, the watchman waketh but in vain.* If he instruct not to secure those issues of life, they will betray and ruine, appear indeed *the savour of death unto death.* Now of this divine art of *Tacticks* and defence, Christianity is the only School, and therefore most fitly qualified for the producing all those supernatural excellencies, to which the timely prepossession of the heart is the rudiment and principle.

By its Promises.

4. And as the *preceptive* part enjoyns the most exact and elevated vertue, so is it most advantageously enforc'd by the *Promissory*, which both in respect of the kind and value of the rewards, and also the manner of proposing them, is most exquisitely adapted to the same end.

Promises not Temporary and Carnal, but Spiritual.

5. For first, if we consider the nature of the things promised, we shall find they are not gross and *carnal*, such as may court and gratifie the bestial part of us; but such as are proportioned to the supreme and leading principle, as feast a *Soul*, and suit with the capacities of an *intelligence*. All the beatitudes the Gospel tenders to its votaries, either relate to the *purity* or peace of the mind in this life; or else to its completer *felicity* hereafter. And though 'tis true, the body is not wholly unconsidered, though the addition of all temporal necessaries be promised, yet even those are for the Souls sake, either to secure it from the sin of solicitude and distrust, or to preserve it a useful instrument for the others service. And as for the future glory in which the body is to partake, 'tis to be observed, that flesh and bloud cannot inherit it; that load of earth which now engages to corruption must be put off, must be calcin'd and spiritualiz'd; and thus made glorious, be clothed upon with Glory. So that in all the Gospel dispensation, there is no *provision for the flesh*, its lusts and sensualities. And then sure there cannot be a more unanswerable argument against our providing for it, than to see it left out of Gods care. Indeed had we proposals of a *Mahumetan*

metan Paradise, were we to expect our bliss only in the satiating our appetites, it might be reasonable here to whet them before-hand, to stretch them to the utmost wideness, or in the Prophets phrase, *to enlarge our desires as Hell*, and by frequent antepasts excite our gust for that profuse perpetual meal. Or were we only to have our portion in this life, to enjoy an uninterrupted affluence of outward comforts, 'twere but good husbandry to improve them to the height, and the Wise mans advice would then cease to be Irony, *Eccles.* 12. 9. *Rejoyce O young man, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and the sight of thine Eyes.* Had we only the prospect of a *Canaan*, such an eternal inheritance as a conquering Sword could give, as the salvation of a *Joshua*, and the affluence of milk and hony could produce: 'Twould be no wonder, if we never voluntarily endured the thirst and famine of the wilderness, but be always, as they, desiring meat for our lust, projecting the gratifying those desires in whose repletion we placed our happiness. But when our Religion makes us no such tender, when all its hopes are of another make, invite to those Diviner joys of which sensuality has no capacity or taste. What pretence can we have to cherish that *here*, which we must wholly be devested of *hereafter?* Those immaterial felicities we expect, do naturally suggest to us, the necessity of preparing our appetites, and hungers for them, without which Heaven can be no Heaven to us: For since the pleasure of any thing results from the agreement between it and the desire, what satisfaction can *Spiritual* enjoyments give unto a *Carnal* mind? Alas, what delight would it be to the Swine to be wrapt in fine Linnen, and laid in Odours? his senses are not gratified by any such delicacies, nor would he feel any thing besides the torment of being with-held from the mire. And as little complacency would a brutish Soul find in those purer and refin'd pleasures, which can only upbraid, not satisfie him. So that could we by an impossible supposition fancy such a one assumed to those fruitions, his pleasure sure would be as little as his preparation for it was. Those *eyes* which have continually beheld vanity, would be dazled, not delighted with the *Beatifick vision*; neither could that *Tongue*, which has accustomed it self only to Oaths and Blasphemies, find Harmony or Musick in a *Hallelujah.* 'Tis the peculiar priviledge of the pure in heart, *that they shall see God*; and if any others could so invade this their incloſure, as to take Heaven by violence, it surely would be a very joyless possession to these men, and only place them in a condition to which they have the greatest aversation and Antipathy. So that holiness here, is not only necessary to the acquiring, but the enjoyment of Bliss hereafter: And therefore unless men will contrive to annihilate their joys, and affect the monstrous riddle of being tormented in Heaven, they cannot but from this Spirituality of the promises, infer a necessity of purifying themselves, and being capable at least of innocent Celestial joys; and since that only can be done by vertuous practice here on Earth, the Obligation thereto must needs be very pressing and indispensable. And as the *nature* of the promises directs to this, so does the great transcendent *value* encourage and animate. *Hope* is the grand exciter of industry, and as the object of Hope is more or less *desirable*, so is the endeavour more *intense* or *remiss*; and upon this ground we must conclude the Christian has all reason to be the most indefatigable, seeing his expectations are the noblest and most encouraging. That they are so, we cannot but acknowledge, if we admit of the description which the *spirit* gives: that *spirit* which as he seals us to it, so is himself the earnest of that Inheritance. He in the Sacred *Scriptures*

tures has drawn up a Map of the Country which we are to enter: And ſure we may ſay of it as *Caleb* and *Joſhua* did of *Canaan*, *Numb.* 14. 7. *the land is an exceeding good land.* For firſt, if we conſider the Negative advantages it has, we ſhall find there is an abſence of all the Ills, deſtructive or affrightful unto humane nature. *There ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying, nor pain, Revel.* 21. 4. Here alas, we are infeſted by all theſe. *Sorrow* and *Pain*, prey and inſult on all the comforts of our lives; leave us not a Gourd, which is not like that of *Jonah*, ſmitten with theſe Worms: and then comes *Death* the grand devourer, and ſpares not *life* it ſelf. Nay, thoſe little *reſpites* which we have from theſe are ſo embittered by unpleaſant expectations and Preſages, that we are ſad before we are *afflicted*: in *pain* without a *diſeaſe*, and in *death* in the midſt of *life*: and then a State exempted, not only from the Calamities but the Fears of theſe, may well deſerve to be lookt upon with appetite.

Heavenly, Glorious, Eternal.

6. But Heaven is deſigned for our reward, as well as reſcue, and therefore is *adumbrated* by all thoſe *poſitive excellencies* which can endear or recommend. It is a *Crown*, and that not of *thorns*, ſuch as our *Saviours* was, and ſuch as the more affected *Diadems* of the world oft prove unto the wearer; *but one of Glory*: nor is that *Crown* nor that *Glory* like our *ſublunary* ſplendors, which ſuddenly vaniſh, and leave the poſſeſſors to the greater obſcurity and contempt; but 'tis *permanent*, ſuch *as fades not away*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. or in S. *Paul's* phraſe, *an eternal weight of glory.* But to give you its more comprehenſive Character, *'tis a being with the Lord*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 17. Nay, 'tis a poſſeſſing even God himſelf. *He ſhall be their God, Rev.* 22. 3. and what can he want who poſſeſſes him who is all things? How can he fail of the moſt raviſhing delight, that ſtands before him, *in whoſe preſence is the fulneſs of Joy*, and *at whoſe right hand are pleaſures*, and thoſe not ſhort or tranſient, *but for evermore?* So indefeaſable is our eſtate in thoſe *Joys*, that if we do not like mad prodigals ſell it in reverſion, we ſhall when we are once inveſted, be beyond the poſſibility of ill husbandry, not have it in our power to undo our ſelves. Now ſurely theſe are great and precious *promiſes*, ſuch as may well ſuſtain the weight of that inference the *Apoſtle* builds upon them; and engage us to *cleanſe* our ſelves from all *filthineſs* both of *fleſh* and *ſpirit*, and *to perfect holineſs in the fear of God*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. for they addreſs to that *Principle* which is confeſtly Predominant in our *Nature*; ſo that if the love of *Chriſt* cannot, yet the love of our *ſelves* may conſtrain us. How muſt it then affront and baffle the enticements of ſin, when we compare its empty vaniſhing *pleaſures* with thoſe ſolid and durable *joys?* What a foreſtalling will it be of Satans markets, that God bids ſo much fairer for us; offers us that to which his ταῦτα πάντα σοι δώσω, *all this will I give* (could he make ſuch a whole-ſale) can bear no proportion: and how then ſhall we ever barter it away for thoſe little petty commodities he retails to us; or make any other reply to his proffers, than a *get thee behind me Satan?* For alas! can we remember that we are *candidates* for a Kingdom, and yet retain the abject ſpirits of *ſlaves?* Do we expect to reign hereafter, and yet depoſe our ſelves before-hand here? ſuffer every the vileſt luſt to rule over us? Is ſo glorious a prize annext to the victory, and will it not animate the fainteſt heart, and feebleſt hands to the combate? What Lions can we fear in the way which this hope is not *Sampſon* enough to encounter? How *light* are our heavieſt, how *momentany* our moſt laſting Afflictions, if balanced with that *eternal weight of Glory?* Are we ſpoil'd of our goods? here is a reſerve of treaſure which no *Thief*, neither the ſlye, nor the avowed, the pilferer, nor the ſequeſtrator can invade.

vade. Are we reduced to our *Saviours* deſtitution, not to have *where to lay our head? yet we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.* Are we reproacht for the name of *Chriſt?* that *Ignominy* ſerves but to advance our future *Glory*, every ſuch *Libel* here, becomes *Panegyrick* there. Nay, are we perſecuted to death? that ſends us but to take poſſeſſion of the Crown of Life. Upon ſuch ſure grounds does our Chriſtianity ſet us. While we make good its condition, it pulls out the ſting of all that is moſt deadly: And in a more comprehenſive ſence, poſſeſſes us of the priviledge promiſed the *Diſciples, that nothing ſhould by any means hurt them, Mar.* 16. The moſt adverſe chances being but like the ploughing and breaking the ground, in order to a more plentiful harveſt. And yet we are not ſo wholly turned off to that reverſion, as to have no ſupplies for the preſent; for beſides the comfort of ſo great and certain an expectation in another *life*, we have promiſes alſo for *this*. Even of all thoſe internal and ſpiritual ſatisfactions which attend the *practice of piety*. The feaſt of a good Conſcience is the true *Chriſtians* daily diet, and ſure whatever the rich men of the world think, he only can be ſaid to fare deliciouſly: Nay, he has yet more *ſupernatural* food, *Manna* rain'd down immediately from Heaven: the *Holy Spirit* ſent on purpoſe to refreſh and ſupport him: thoſe Joys which differ rather in degree than kind, from thoſe which are to be his final portion. And that the *Soul* may not be too much incommoded in her houſe of clay, there is proviſion made for that alſo, ſuch neceſſaries ſecured to the body, as may keep it in *Tenantable* repair: We have *Chriſts* expreſs promiſe for it, that *to thoſe that ſeek the Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, all theſe things ſhall be added:* If not that ſuperfluity which may oppreſs and load, (render the *body* rather the Tomb than Manſion of the *ſoul*) yet ſuch as may ſuſtain and ſupport us: and ſure 'tis eaſie to decide which is the happier lot. In ſhort, we are ſure enough to defray the charge of that voyage, which lands us at *Eternal bliſs:* And certainly he muſt be of a very ſluggiſh or querulous humour, that ſhall *demur* upon ſetting out, or demand higher encouragements.

Propos'd with evidence and plainneſs.

7. And as the *nature* and value of the *Promiſes* render them moſt proper engagements and incentives to all *vertue*; ſo if we conſider the *manner* of propoſing, we ſhall find them in that reſpect alſo highly contributive to the ſame end. For firſt, they are clear and expreſs, not wrapt up in dark *ænigmatical* inſinuations, wherein men muſt exerciſe their *ſagacity* as well as their *faith:* but revealed with that plainneſs, that 'tis impoſſible for any who knows but the letter of the *Goſpel*, to be ignorant of the Eternal reward it propoſes. And herein the difference belongs to *Chriſtianity* above all other *Religions*, ſome whereof have left men ſo much in the dark, that many *Sects* among them have denied the immortality of the *Soul*; and ſure they were but faint encouragements they could propoſe unto that *vertue* which was to periſh with them. What ſhould animate them to the rugged ſevere taſks of reſtraining appetites, ſubduing paſſions, eradicating habits who diſcerned no rewards for blameleſs *ſouls?* 'Tis true indeed *vertue* is in her ſelf perfectly amiable, though ſhe brought no dowry, but experience ſhews us ſhe has not many *Platonick* lovers: And when ſo few are ambitious to wed Her, when ſhe brings an Eternal inheritance with her, we may eaſily gueſs how little ſhe will be ſought without it. When men once conclude that their *Spirits* ſhall vaniſh into the ſoft Air; the inference is very obvious, *Come on, let us uſe the creatures as in youth*; as we find it elegantly purſued, *Wiſd.* 2. But of thoſe who acknowledged a future being, their perceptions were very miſty and obſcure. The *Heathens*

had

had such confus'd notions of their *Elysium*, that the *Epithet* of *shades* belong'd more properly to the darkness than the refreshment, and was a reward fit for the votaries of those ambiguous *Oracles* they consulted. And proportionably to the obscurity of their hopes were the Exercises of their *Vertue*: their *piety* was even overwhelmed and confounded by the multitude of their *Deities*; nay, which is yet stranger, their *Gods* themselves seem to have been lost in their own croud: else sure the *Athenians* would never have inscrib'd an Altar to the *unknown God*: And indeed their offices were generally such, as if they had been devoted to no other, they having as little discerning of their *Worship* as of their *God*. 'Twas wrapt up in clouds and darkness; had mysterious recesses to which the common worshipper had no admittance; such as were to require a veneration only by not being understood: And though this must needs deprive their services of that spirit and quickness, which constitutes the *vertue* of devotion, yet alas, their *Religion* had more than that negative contrariety to *vertue*. Many of their *worships* being nothing but a solemnity of the foulest *vices*: and their *Divinity* taught them to violate *Morality*. A deceit *Satan* could not probably so long have triumpht in, had they had the Gospel notion of Heaven, for sure they could not have suppos'd their *Gods* of such mutable inclinations, as to affect *purity* in their Cohabitants, and *pollution* in their Votaries: or such incongruous dispensers of rewards, as to apportion an impeccable state hereafter to the most flagitious criminals on Earth.

Not as to the Jews, in Types and outward Ceremonies.

8. As to the *Jews* 'tis true, they derived their light from a clearer Fountain, were under the *Oeconomy* of immediate Revelation, and therefore might be suppos'd to have had a freer prospect into that Heaven, from whence their *Law* descended, yet even they were in this, as in many other particulars, under *Moses* his veil, had rather dark *adumbrations*, and those too overwhelmed with the multitude of expres temporal promises. The earthly *Canaan* lay so fair and open to their prospect, as easily intercepted their view of the *Heavenly*; and their *faith* must remove, at least overlook, that *mountain* before it could come to any sight of the *Horizon* and extended *Sky*. Nay, when 'tis remembred that the *Sadducees* a great and learned part of their Doctors denied all future being, we must think the intimations of it were very obscure; it being scarce imaginable, that any considering men should think the *Souls* expir'd with the *Body* upon any other ground, but that they knew not what after-state to assign it. So that though they wanted not *figures* and *shadows*, or as the Apostle calls them, *patterns of Heavenly things*, *Heb. 9. 23.* yet they seem'd not to have been well understood, and the generality of men were not only in their Persons, but their Understandings denied entrance into the *holy of holies*; penetrated not that mystical representation, which was within the Veil: And answerable to this dimness of their perceptions, was the whole *systeme* and *body* of their *Religion*, which rather entertain'd it self in those *external bodily* performances, which affected the *sense*, than in those *Divine* and *Spiritual* raptures, which purified and elevated the *Soul*. 'Tis the *Apostles* affirmation, *Heb. 9. that the sacrifices there offered could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience*, and he gives the reason in subjoyning, that they stood only in *meats and drinks*, and *carnal ordinances*. Alas what propriety had all their legal purifications towards the cleansing of the mind? That might be in the *Mire* while the body was in the *Laver*: and while the surface of the man was sprinkled with bloud, the heart might be more bestial than those creatures who lent the *ablution*. And indeed if we consider their morality, we shall find that outside formal ceremony

mony had proceeded to infect and poison that also. The outward restraint, the bare forbearance of an actual commission, being by them thought a full compliance with all the Negative precepts: So that we see *Christ* is fain to assert the Internal part of the Obligation, and extend the duty to the thoughts and inclinations. Besides, those acts of *vertue* they perform'd were commonly such as had an Aspect, rather on their temporal well-being, than distant and unseen rewards; their Justice, and Charity confin'd to their own *Nation*, directed to the flourishing of their own *Common-wealth*: whereas *Aliens* were devoted to their rapine and despight; so that if they were *vertues*, they were rather *Political* than *Moral*, and indeed while they placed so much of their hopes on *Earth*, lookt on *secular* plenty and tranquillity as their reward, 'twas but consonant they should square their endeavours by that measure, and consider things not simply in their native properties of good or ill, but according to their tendency towards that they esteem'd their *felicity*.

Promises better in their nature, and in the terms of Assurance.

9. But God has provided, as the *Apostle* says, *Heb.* 11.40. *better things for us*, has not only made a better Covenant with us, but has *establisht it upon better promises*, *Chap.* 8. 6. given us clearer revelations, not only of our *duty*, but our *recompence*; the veil in *Christ* is done away, and we all with open face, *Behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. The Gospel puts the evidences of our inheritance into our own hands, seal'd by his explicit and direct promise, who cannot lye: and that not only engag'd by way of *munificence*, but bargain and contract, as the purchase of that *price*, which our *Redeemer* fully paid in our behalf. And sure this is in the *Apostles* phrase *strong consolation*; and if so, it must be forcible enticement likewise, he cannot but run alacriously, who has the prize in his Eye, nor can S. *Paul* use a more pressing argument to his *Corinthians*, *To be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*, than this assurance, *That their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58.

Are conditional, and thereby ingages to holiness.

10. And as this clear proposal of the *promises* is most proper to encourage and inspirit our endeavours, so is the conditionality most efficacious to necessitate and engage them. Had *Heaven* been only promis'd as a largess, and with a blind promiscuous bounty dispens'd without discrimination, how much it might have rais'd our *gratitude*, I know not, but sure it would not have excited our *industry*, which in all instances we find is whetted by interest: and where that is otherwise secur'd, men generally estimate it a part of the benefit that their labour is superseded; and please themselves no less in a lazy bequest, than a full enjoyment. So that indeed it is this circumstance of the *promises* that must give life to all the rest, and make them operative toward the producing of *good life*; for admit the *joys* we expect never so *Divine* and *Spiritual* for their kind, never so great and transcendent for degree, and these also represented to us in the most clear and convincing manner: Yet if they be tendered not as objects of our choice, but the certainty of our fate-*felicities* which we are only concerned to enjoy, but not to acquire, they may make us glad, but surely not diligent; it being but a cold inducement to any undertaking to be assur'd 'tis perfectly needless: We have therefore all reason to confess it our greatest advantage towards *vertue*, that God has so linkt our *hopes* and our *duty* together. And indeed when we consider the great disproportion between the one and the other; the infinity of the *reward*, with the despicableness of the *service*: we must resolve that he had no other design in making his *promises* conditional, than to engage us by our interest to that *holiness*, to which he saw our inclinations did not bind us: that it was an artifice of his

his *love* to ensnare us into two *felicities* by proposing of one, enforce us to take one good in the way to another, *vertue* in passage to *glory*.

Are also enforc'd by menaces of punishment.

11. And indeed who would not think this method so invincibly efficacious, as might supersede the necessity of any other; but God who understands our thoughts long before, *Psal.* 139. 1. foresaw that notwithstanding this proposal of a *Canaan*, there would be *Reubenites* and *Gadites*, who would set up their rest on this side of *Jordan*; so intent on the commodity of their Cattle, as to be content themselves to be part of the Herd, and *become like the beasts that perish*: That there would be men of so ignoble, disingenuous tempers, as none of these cords of a man would be able to draw: and therefore there is another part of the *Gospel-Oeconomy* fitted to their capacities; the *threats* and *interminations*, those terrors of the *Lord*, which as Goads may drive those brutish Creatures who will not be attracted: that those who think themselves perfectly unconcern'd in *Davids* question, *who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord*, *Psal.* 24. 3. may yet startle at *Esays*, *who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?* Of so formidable a kind are those menaces, as is sufficient to awake the most drowsie stupid *Soul*, and are most apt to operate upon that part of their temper, which evacuated the gentler method: that very sensuality which made them despise *Heaven*, may help to enhanse the dread of *Hell*; the lack of a *drop of water* will be most insupportable to him who fared deliciously every day; those *flames* will be yet more scorching to those bodies, who by studious effeminacies and softness have superadded an artificial tenderness to the natural; nor will the *gnawing of the worm* appear more intolerable to any, than those who here make it their business to tye up its *Jaws*, gag or stupifie that *Conscience* which would now admonish, but will there torment. And when to this is added the *perpetuity* of these *pains*, that *the worm shall never die*, *the fire never be quencht*, certainly this puts such an edge upon the terror, as may well make it in the *Apostles* phrase, *quick* and *powerful*, *searching even to the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit*, *the joynts and marrow*, when we are assur'd *that the Axe is thus laid unto the root of the tree*, *and that every tree that brings not forth good fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire*, we shall sure be warn'd *to bring forth meet fruits of repentance*, *and fly from the wrath to come*.

Are assisted by Supernatural aids in the performance of Duty.

12. But because neither invitations nor threats can avail with those who are any way invincibly impeded to apply them to their benefit: Since the most *glorious prize*, the most formidable danger, is insignificant to him, who wants power to run unto the one, or from the other; it has pleased God to inspirit and actuate all his *Evangelical* methods, by a concurrence of *supernatural* strength, makes it not only eligible but possible, I may say easie and pleasant for us to do whatever he commands us: and notwithstanding our natural debility, makes us through *Christ* which strengthens us, *able to do all things*: By his Spirit he prevents, assists, restrains, excites, comforts, convinces; gives grace, and adds to that the happier largess of a will to use it, and knowledge to discern the want of more: Infusing to the *Soul* an ardent thirst of greater powers, and readier means of service, which the performance actuates to greater strengths, and yet enflames to new desires, and more importunate pursuits, whilst God at once bestows and crowns his own donations; still giving unto him that has, till that at last he give himself; and *grace is swallowed up in glory*. And to assure us of this aid, he has been pleased to oblige himself; descends to the solemnity of a *Pact* and *Covenant*; has indented with us, and constituted it a principal part of the new and everlasting *Covenant made with mankind in the bloud of*

of the Son of God, to send the comforter, his Holy Spirit, to be with us till the end of the world, and do all this. So that the Gospel is at once the assigner of our tasks, and the *Magazine* of our strength; so much Spirit goes along with that Letter; so much internal grace is annexed to its outward administration, as will to all, who do not resist it, infallibly render it *the power of God to salvation*. For 'tis not the sole priviledge of a S. *Paul*, but the common portion of all *Christians*, *That Gods grace shall be sufficient for them*; which is sure a more Gospel-like promise, than that it should be too strong for them: So violent and irresistible as to commit a rape upon their *Spirits*; such a mighty wind as drives them headlong upon *duty*. Indeed this competency is of all other proportions the most *incentive* to industry; we see in *Temporals*, too little makes men desperate, and too much careless; and certainly 'twould be the same in *Spirituals*: But now when we have stock enough to set up with, and that too of so improvable a nature, that is capable of infinite advancement, and yet on the other side no less capable of total decay also, it being given with this express condition, that upon neglect it shall be withdrawn: So that our own sloth may make us *poor*, but nothing else can keep us from being abundantly *rich*: What can be imagin'd more animating to diligence and endeavour? And this being the condition wherein our *Christianity* has placed us, added to the former considerations, will beyond exception or *subterfuge*, evince its perfect *aptitude* and *fitness* for the End to which it was aim'd, *the Planting and nourishing all true Vertue among men*, the introducing the tree of life into the world again, and so forming us a *Paradise* even amidst the briers and thorns of our Exil'd state.

CHAP. II.

The Character of Christian-mens Practice, shewing their multiplied failance both from the rule of that holy profession, and its genuine effect.

1. AND now who can suspect that a *cause* so rightly dispos'd, should miss of its *effect*? That this so *auspicious Planet* should be counter-influenc'd by any *malevolent Star*? Or that what has so many tenures in us, should be finally disseis'd? For, admit we have not the Piety to be prevail'd upon by the reverence of the *Author*; yet the excellency of its *composition* does so much recommend it to our reason, that we must put off the best part of our *Nature* to evacuate the force of our Religion: Nay, supposing us to have done that too, to have struck our selves out of the list of *Rationals*, yet if we keep but the rank of *Animals*, if we have not extinguisht passion and sense, it descends even to them; addresses to our hopes and fears with most importunate solicitations, and convincing motives: So that unless we have the absurd ill luck to have much of the *Stoick*, and nothing of the *Philosopher*, 'twill be impossible to resist its impressions: And sure he that contemplates *this*, will be apt with some confidence to conclude *Christendom* to be the *Goshen* of the world, not only in respect of its *light*, but of its *immunity* from all those *Locusts* and *Caterpillars*, those swarms of mean and sordid Vices which both cover and devour the rest of the *Earth*. *Difficult to resist the force of Christianity.*

2. But this must be the inference of a mere *contemplative*, a Recluse that converses only with his own meditations: For let him be so much *secular*, as once to look abroad, the most *transient* glance will serve to unravel *Degeneracy of Christians.*

all his hopeful *speculation*, and shew him that *Christendom* may be as much *Heathen* as *America:* Whereas 'tis usually said, that ill *Manners* produce good Laws, we have reverst the *Aphorism*, and our good *Law* has introduc'd the most corrupt manners. Our holy *faith* which like a foundation should support good works, has like a gulf *swallowed* them up. And so universal a depravation is there among us, that we have scarce any thing left to distinguish us from the most barbarous people, but a better name and worse vices.

Their lives contrary to their profession.

3. And here, what terms of wonder or of grief can be significant enough to express or to bewail so strange and so perverse degeneration, that the *light* of the *world* should thus darken it; the *salt* of the *earth* be the means of putrifying and corrupting it? That those who were by God drawn out from the *Heathen* world, should so outvy the *Gentiles* crimes, as if they had forsaken them, only because they were too *innocent? This* indeed is one of *Satans* subtillest stratagems, to fill Christ's *Camp* thus with his *Souldiers*, by whose intestine treacheries, he has been more *triumphant* than by all his open assaults and avowed hostilities. What a late *Statesman* said (*Prophetically*, if we may judge by the event) of *England*, that *it was a vivacious animal that could never die except it kill'd it self*, is no less true of the *Church*, which has always been *invulnerable* against all *darts*, but what have been taken out of its own *quiver*. Of *this* the *Primitive* times were *pregnant* testimonies, where all the most witty cruelties, the most bloudy persecutions, never made any breach in her: But she stood firmer for all those batteries, and like an Arch'd Building, became more strong and compact, by that weight which was design'd to crush her: But the *Vice* of *Professors* undermines her very foundation, and does as much exceed the *destructiveness* of the most hostile assaults, as intestine *treachery* is more ruinous and fatal, than foreign *violence*.

Admirable lives of Primitive Christians.

4. As long as the *lives* of Christians were the *transcripts* of their doctrine, they rendred it venerable to all, and gave a presumption there was something more than *humane* in it, that could work such signal *effects*, that could so transform *men* as to make the *adulterer* chaste, the *drunkard* temperate, the *covetous* liberal, the *contentious* peaceable. *This*, this was the way to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, as the Apostle speaks, *Tit.* 2. 10. And then the *rule of contraries* directs us to conclude very distant *effects* from our now so distant *practices*, that our very *religion* should partake of the *infamy* of our lives, and be thought rather a *mystery* of *iniquity* than *godliness*.

Religion suffers for the wickedness of its professors.

5. Thus is *Christ* wounded in the house of his *friends*, and has more *reproach* cast on him by those that *profess* his name, than by the loudest blasphemies of those that *oppose* it. For when those who have not opportunity to examine our *faith*, see the enormousness of our *works*, what should hinder them from measuring the *Master* by the *Disciples?* It being scarce imaginable that any one *Sect* of men should so universally run counter to all the rules of their profession: For let any sober Heathen look upon *Christendom*, as it is at *this day* weltring in the bloud, not of *Martyrdom* but *War*, and will it be possible for him to think it owns a Gospel of *Peace*; or that those who so perpetually do those outrages they are unwilling to suffer, profess obedience to the *Royal Law* of *Love thy neighbour as thy self*, *Jam.* 2. 8. Can he see the violence and oppressions, the *frauds* and underminings, the busie *scramblings* for little parcels of *Earth*; and yet believe we count our selves *strangers* and pilgrims in it, and have laid up our treasure in *Heaven?* Can he *observe* the strange and almost universal

universal distortion of speech, whereby it has lost its native property of being *interpreter* of the mind, and under *intelligible* words so far exhibits the *Babel* confusion, that no man understands anothers meaning? and can he *imagine* we have any such *Precepts*, as *Lye not one to another*, or any such *penalty* upon the infringer, as *exclusion from the new Jerusalem?* Shall we *hear* our *God* mention'd more frequently and earnestly in our *imprecations* than our *prayers*, and every part of our crucified *Saviour*, recrucified in our horrid *oaths*; And shall he not *think* that his *second* executioners bear him as little reverence as his *first*; Or that *he* has given no such *command* as *Swear not at all?* When he discerns *self-preservation* bow'd to as the *Supreme Law*; Can he ever *dream* of another so inconsistent *obligation* as that of *taking up the cross?* Or that *suffering for righteousness sake* is one of our greatest *felicities*, when he sees us run so affrighted from it, that no crime, perjury, rebellion, murder, is block enough in our way to stop our flight? In *fine*, when he considers how much of our business it is, first to excite, and then to cloy the flesh, to spur it on to riots even beyond its own propensions, that the whole year is but one mad carnival, and we are *voluptuous* not so much upon *desire* or appetite, as by way of *exploit* and bravery: When I say he considers this, can he possibly gues our *institution* directs us to beat down the body, to *mortifie the flesh with the affections and lusts*, interdicts us all *rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness*, and *all provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof?* Certainly all rules of discourse will direct him to the quite contrary conclusion. And when he sees a Set of men that have enhans'd the common humane pravity, he will be apt to infer their Principles have taught them the improvement: And upon that supposal he wanted not temptation to his Option that said, *Let my soul be with the Philosophers.*

6. And while we thus misrepresent our holy profession to *others*, it will be no wonder if we finally do it to *our selves*, that we forget its *native shape*, and look on her only in the *ugly dress* our selves have put on, and that effect seems already too visible among us: Our lives have so long confuted it, that we triumph over it as a baffled thing; and like *Amnon*, loath it because we have ravisht and defil'd it. Many of us take notice of the better Morals of *Turks* and *Infidels* not in reproach of our selves, but our Religion, and because we have so many *Lepers*, think *Abanah* and *Pharphar*, better than all the waters of *Israel*; this is openly in the *mouths* of many, but is so prodigiously *irrational* as well as *unjust*, that one can scarce think it possible to be in their *hearts*, unless they be pursued by the fate of habitual lyars, that at last come to perswade themselves. *And is contemn'd thereby.*

7. Certainly there is no other parallel instance wherein men conclude so perversly: He that shews a man that precipice upon whose brink he stands, that intreats, yea importunes him to retire from the *danger*; nay, bribes him with the greatest rewards to chuse *safety*, has done all that can be expected from a friend, or charitable man: And if after all, the wretched person so advis'd, shall cast himself head-long upon ruine; assuredly no *Inquest* would return his murder in any other *form* than that of *Felo de se*. And why then should our Christianity be accus'd of those ills which it would infallibly avert, if our obstinacy would permit it? Indeed the charge is so wild, that it seems rather design'd as an artifice of diversion, a sprout of that first fig-tree which was to hide the nakedness of lapsed *Adam*. Men think it policy to transfer their guilts, and are willing, the *violence* of their lusts should pass for the *impotence* of their Religion. Like irregular *patients* blaming their *Physician* for those ill accidents *Ought not to be charg'd with their guilt.*

which they know owing only to their own unrulineſs. A pregnant teſtimony of the reproachful nature of ſin, that men are content to betake themſelves to the moſt forlorn ſhifts to avoid the owning it: But the conſciouſneſs is ſo preſſing and intolerable, that with many, it drives on to yet higher outrages: 'Tis not enough for men to decry their *Chriſtianity* as a feeble *inſignificant* thing, but they load it even with contradictory *imputations*, and that which ſometimes they call *the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, to bring it in ſcorn and contempt, ſhall at another be ſtiled an *Art* and *trick* to bring it into ſuſpicion and hatred, be arraign'd for impoſture and deceit, a project of impoſing upon credulous ſouls, and gaining real advantages to the managers, while they feed the ſilly *Proſelyte* with imaginary ones. How groundleſs a calumny this is, as it appears from the ſanctity, and eminent ſimplicity of Chriſtian Religion, which above all things excludes fraud and falſhood; ſo alſo from the deſignments and aims of its firſt promulgators, who as they cannot be ſuppos'd dexterous enough to lay ſuch a ſcene of taking Pageantry; ſo all their viſible acqueſts were ſcourgings and impriſonments, perſecutions and death. If this were the caſe, it would indeed go near to reconcile the before-mentioned contradictory *imputations*, whilſt the impoſing upon credulous ſouls at this dear rate, would be in very deed *the fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, the greateſt madneſs in the world. Men of common reaſon would be aſham'd to uſe ſuch frivolous cavils: But who can without horror hear them from profeſt Chriſtians? That while *Infidels* are modeſt in their reproaches, look upon our Doctrine only as erroneous, *Diſciples* ſhould be bitter, and charge it as inſidious and treacherous? Thus does the *Church* experiment the truth of her bleſſed *Lords Predictions*, and finds her *foes are thoſe of her own houſe*: And though ſhe be Chriſts *Dove*, yet is ſubjected to the fate of the *Viper*, and has her bowels torn out by thoſe that ſpring from them.

Principles of Religion now call'd in queſtion.

8. Theſe are the growing conſequences of *reſolute impiety*, he who will not be kept within the bounds of duty, ſeldom contents himſelf with that bare violation: He not only *breaks the bonds in ſunder*, but *caſts them away* too; is impatient they ſhould keep a reputation to upbraid him, when he has robb'd them of the power of reſtraining him: And *this* ſure is the bottom of all that deep reaſoning, by which men have learnt to argue themſelves and others out of their *Creed:* And though this be indeed the great *Arcanum*, the *Philoſophers ſtone* they aim at; yet they have met with another good experiment by the way: And have, by I know not what *Chymiſtry*, extracted a reputation out of theſe moſt unapt *materials*. He paſſes for a conſidering man that diſputes principles, and is thought moſt to own his *reaſon* that leaſt owns his *faith*: And then 'twill be no wonder if this ſucceſs animate, and give them not only confidence, but vanity to avow what is thus creditable.

And diſbeliev'd by many.

9. Indeed Satan is too ſubtle a manager to loſe this advantage, and the event ſadly ſhews, he has not neglected to improve it, as appears not only by the number of ſuch pretenders unto reaſon, but even by their advancing to higher degrees. The *voluptuary* who *likes* his portion in this world, and fears that in another, is at firſt only prompted by his intereſt to quarrel the *laſt Articles* of the *Creed*, and ſo in his own defence denies the *life everlaſting*: But when he finds his neceſſity made a vertue, and himſelf ſtruck into the repute of a Wit; upon that account he doubts not, his fame will encreaſe with his irreligion, and ſo proceeds ſtill to unravel farther, till at laſt he leaves not ſo much as *I believe in God*: That many have advanc'd ſo far is too evident, and by ſome ſo own'd, that they will not thank his charity, that ſhall hope better of them.

10. 'Twas

10. 'Twas once the *triumph* of infant Christianity, that it silenc'd all the *Heathen Oracles*, and within a while demolish'd even the *Synagogue* too: But alas, its mature age gives us that effect in a most inverted sence, it now has serv'd to suppress even the common notions of a *Deity*, turn'd out the *one* as well as the *many* Gods, and instead of *Polytheists* and *Idolaters*, has made *Atheists*, and *that* which Christ tells us was design'd *to perfect and fill up the Law*, has by the strange pravity of its professors at once obliterated both *Law* and *Law-giver* out of mens minds, thereby exemplifying the old Axiom, *Corruptio optimi est pessima*; and the *Saint* as well as the *Angel*, if he desert his innocence, commences Fiend and *Devil*. These are such sad, such direful transmutations, as excite not so much wonder, as grief and lamentation; and what Rivers, what Oceans of tears are competent to bewail such unutterable evils?

Atheism gets ground of Religion.

11. The removal of the *Candlestick* is so formidable a *judgment*, that the threatning of it, is us'd by Christ as the most awaking menace to the Seven Churches, *Revel.* 2. 3. but the removing it by our own hands is yet an enhansement of that highest calamity; when men are come to such an insensate obduration, that they court their *Plagues*, become their own *Lictors*, and make that their *choice* which is their extremest *punishment*, they are certainly too secure of that ruine they call for: And may we not fear it may prove *general*, and involve us all? That while so *many* cry out to be deliver'd from their Christianity as their load and pressure, and so *few* express their dissent to that demand, God may in judgment grant it, hearken to those that cry loudest, rescue his Gospel from our profane and impious violations, and give it to others that may bring forth the fruits of it.

Removal of the Gospel to be fear'd thereupon.

12. Nor is this to be fear'd only from the *explicit* importunities of the blasphemous, for it is interpretatively the vote of many others; whoever give themselves up to the dominion of any lust, do *implicitly* renounce their obedience to Christ, and say, *we will not have this man to rule over us.* And when he is thus depos'd from his *regal* and directive power, we have reason to believe he will despise a mere *titular* soveraignty, not suffer the Scepter of his Word to remain as an Empty *Ceremony* among those, who pay it no real obedience: nor be again cloath'd with Purple, crown'd, and saluted King to advance the triumph of his scorn and crucifixion.

Our Hypocrisie may hasten it.

13. Nor will the fawning Professions of the demure hypocrite *avert*, but *accelerate* this Fate: He that makes the *Golden Scepter* in Christs hand, a *rod of Iron* in his own, that thinks his *Saintship* licenses him to all the severe censures, and the yet severer (because more effective) *oppressions* of others, he is certainly to be lookt on not only as a Rebel, but an Usurper too, and is of all others the highest provoker. He that *tramples* under foot the Son of God, does not so much violate him, as he that *pretends* to erect him a Throne upon bloud and rapine, on perjury and sacriledge: Nor does he that accounts the Bloud of the *Covenant* an *unholy* thing so much profane it, as he that uses it as a *Varnish* to paint over his foulest lusts. The Apostle has long since told us, *there is no concord between Christ and Belial*, and can we think he will be patient thus to be made subservient to his enemy? Or suffer his *Ark* to be set for the *support*, which should be the *confusion* of *Dagon*? Do we find him so severely upbraid the hypocrisie of the *Jews*, that *stole, murdered, committed adultery, and swore falsly, and yet came and stood before him in his house, Jer.* 7. 9. and shall we hope he will connive at it in Christians? Was it intolerable profanation in them to account his house a den of robbers, and shall we be permitted to *make* it so? They are sent to *Shiloh* to read their own destiny, and surely we are as likely to find

ours

ours there too; to be deprived of those advantages which we have so unworthily us'd: Nor can we expect, that though God cause the natural *Sun to rise still as well on the evil as the good*, yet that the *Sun of righteousness* shall continue to shine on those who will only bask themselves in his Rays, grow *Æthiops* from his *neighbourhood*, but will not work by his *light*.

Gods patience provok'd by these sins.

14. When all this is consider'd, what a sad abode does it make? When the *blasphemies* of the Profane, the *sensualities* of the Voluptuous, and the *mockeries* of the Hypocrite, send, as it were, daily Challenges to Heaven, we cannot but look it should at last *overcome* its long-suffering, *awake* God to vindicate the honour of his Name, and not suffer it any longer to be thus prostituted and polluted: that when he sees his light serve only to aid us the more subtilly to contrive our deeds of darkness, he should withdraw it, smite us with blindness like the *Sodomites*, whom he finds in such impure pursuits: And were that *blindness* such as our Saviour speaks of, *Joh.* 9. 41. that inferr'd the *no sin*, 'twere a desirable infliction, but alas, it has none of that property: That which is designed for the punishment can never be the extenuation of our guilt; but as in Hell there is an unhappy Separation of *effects*, the scorching of the *flame* without the light, and the blackness of *night* without the rest: So in this neareſt approach to it, this Portal to those Chambers of death, there is the ignorance without the excuse, the darkness divested of its native quality of hiding: And when we are entred among *Heathens* here, we must yet expect the sadder portion of *Apostatiz'd* Christians hereafter.

Which Repentance only can appease.

15. And O that this *consideration* might at last have its proper *operation*, rouse and awake us timely to prevent those evils which it will be impossible to cure. That by bringing forth some more *genuine* and kindly fruits, we may avert that *dismal* sentence, *Cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground.* That men would generally lay to heart both the *sin* and infamy of being *promoters of publick ruine*; and quench that *fire* with their tears which their sins have kindled, that the fasting and prayers, the sighs and groans of the *Primitive* Christians may supplant the profane luxuries, the carnal Jollities of the *Modern*. And that Sackcloth and ashes may become the *universal mode*, the only *fashionable* dress among us. *This* both Reason and Religion suggest as matter of our most importunate wishes; would God our hopes were but half as pregnant.

Every man to amend one.

16. But the *less appearance* there is of this universal reformation, the *more jealously* ought every single person to look on himself, lest he be one that obstructs it: For so he does who stays till it be a *fashion*, but neglects to contribute his part to the making it so. Men are willing to discourage themselves from attempts of this kind, and with an unseasonable modesty can reflect what a nothing one man is to so many millions, when alas, all that vast Empire Vice has got in the world, is founded in the pravity of single persons, and would certainly be ruin'd by their reformation. The more reasonable Collection would be, that he that considers himself but as *one*, should not suffer himself to grow into *less*; to fall from that *Unit* to a *Cypher*, by permitting sloth or cowardize to enfeeble and emasculate him: But on the contrary should recollect his spirits, actuate all his strength, and therefore be sure to do his utmost, because that *utmost* is but a *little*.

And take part with Religion.

17. And to this certainly there want not encouragements. We see in common affairs the wonders that industry and resolution are able to effect, and a *single* courage being exerted, has often without *Romance*, overcome *giantly* difficulties. 'Tis a great prejudice is cast upon Vertue by the pusillanimity of those that *like*, but dare not *abet* her. When most men commit

mit all impieties daringly, and openly, and those few that do mourn for it, do it but in secret, the example of the *one* is contagious, but the *other* has no means to diffuse it self. Would men stoutly own *duty*, and not like *Peter*, *follow Christ afar off*, they might yet hope to make a party and *gain ground* in the world. And how noble an attempt were this, thus to encounter Satan in his highest triumph, and recover a *lost field?* And methinks those who have any *warmth* of Piety glowing within, may easily thus improve it into a *flame*, ἐπιχορηγῆσαι ἐν τῇ πίστει τὴν ἀρετὴν, *add to their faith vertue*, as that signifies *courage:* and then readily would succeed that train of Christian excellencies reckon'd up by S. *Peter*, 2 *Epist.* 1. 5. *knowledge*, *temperance*, *patience*, *godliness*, and superstruct on these, as it there follows, *brotherly kindness*, and the most comprehensive *charity*. We should be not only devout towards *God*, but zealous towards *Men*, endeavouring by all prudent means to recover them out of those snares of the Devil, whereby they are taken captive. And since among all those snares there is none more entangling, than the creditableness and repute of customary vices, to set themselves especially against that overgrown covering and ornament; those *Locks* wherein its great, its *Sampson-like strength* lies: And strive to render it as condemn'd as it is base: and to this purpose nothing is so apt, as the exalting its competitor, fetching vertue out of the Dungeon, that darkness and obscurity wherein it has long lain forgotten, and by making it illustriously visible in their *own* practice, put it into the possibility of attracting *others*. Indeed there only it appears in its true splendor, they are but dead colours the sublimest speculation can put on it, he that would draw it to the life, must imprint it upon his own. And thus every pious person may, nay ought, to be a *Noah*, a Preacher of righteousness: And if it be his fortune to have as imperswasible an Auditory, if he cannot avert the *deluge*, it will yet be the providing himself an *Ark*, the delivering, yea advancing his *own soul*, if he cannot benefit *other mens*.

18. Nay, this being a *Noah* may qualifie him to be a *Moses* too, give him such an *interest* with Heaven, that he may be fit to stand in the gap to be an *intercessor* and Mediator for a provoking people. And God knows never any generation more needed that *office:* nor any part of this more than our sinful Nation, which having long been in the *furnace*, is indeed now come out, but so unpurified, that we have all reason to expect a return, and that not upon the former frustrated design of *refining*; but upon that more infallible and fatal one of *consuming* us. This is so dreadful, but withal so just an expectation, that if there be any *Jacobs* among us; any, *who can wrestle and prevail with God*, there never was so pressing need of their intercession. O let all that are thus fitted for it, vigorously undertake this pious work; let no *Moses*'s hands ever wax heavy, but be always held up in a devout importunity; let them transcribe that holy Oratory, which he so often effectually used, plead to God his own cause, with a *What wilt thou do to thy great Name?* And when there is nothing in us that can pretend to any thing but vengeance, ransack Gods *bosom*, rifle his *bowels* for arguments of *compassion*, repeat to him his own *titles*, that he is *long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*, *Numb.* 14. 18. And by these solicite, yea, conjure him to pity. And how great an ardency is required to this intercession? What *strong* cries must they be that shall drown so *loud* a clamour of impieties? And how does it reproach the slightness of our sleepy heartless addresses? Can we hope to bind Gods hands with Withs and Straws? To arrest his vengeance with such faint and feeble assaults? And when *nature* and *danger* suggest to Heathen *Nine-*

And interceed with God on its behalf.

veh,

veh, not *only* to cry, but cry *mightily* to God, shall the superaddition of our Religion damp ours into a *whisper*, a soft *unaudible* sound? A storm will teach the profane Mariner to pray in earnest, and alas! we have not wanted that discipline. 'Tis not long since we might have said with those, *Acts* 27. *No small tempest has long lain on us, neither Sun nor Stars in many days*, nay in many *years*, *appearing*, nothing but black and dismal portents of a final *wreck* to a poor *weather-beaten Church*, and then sure 'twas time to be importunate, to learn so much of instruction from the waves that tossed us, as to make our prayers keep pace with them, in swift uninterrupted succession, in loud and not to be resisted violence. That we did so *then* I dare not affirm, but sure I am the necessity of it is not *yet* out-dated; for though the Sky however black with clouds carry no thunder in it; though the impetuous winds that blow from every quarter, should not break out in tempest, and bring shipwrack to us; yet we too fully exemplifie the truth of the *Prophets* Axiome, *That the wicked are like the troubled Sea, that cannot rest:* We have *within* us a principle of ruine, which can operate though nothing from *without* excite it. A tempest is not always necessary to sink a Ship, one treacherous leak may do it in the greatest calm, and what security can there then be to our torn Vessel, whose rents our continued divisions do still keep open. Indeed our *preservation* must be as our *restauration* was, the work of Omnipotence; thither therefore let us address with S. *Peter's* pathetick Prayer, *Save, Lord, or we perish.* O that all who are concern'd in the grant of that Petition, would qualifie themselves to present it; lift up such pure hands, *that God who hears not sinners, Joh. 9.* may yet hear them, afford a gracious ear, and give an answer of *Peace.*

CHAP. III.

A Survey of the Mischiefs arising from Inconsideration.

Occasions of the foregoing unhappiness, and

1. THE last Section having defeated all the promising hopes of the former, by shewing us how sadly we have frustrated all the designs and engagements of our profession; enervated all those apt and powerful methods, and how perfectly contrary our *practices* are to our *rules*, mere curiosity would more prompt us to enquire what are the hidden *causes* of those so strange *effects*; what unhappy propriety there is in the *soil*, that after so much *culture* and husbandry it should produce nothing but *wild* Grapes; and by what arts and wiles Satan has not only evaded, but even retorted those blows which were aim'd at him. But as in *diseases* the *pains* and languishing are obvious to the grossest sense, but the *springs* and originals of them most frequently lye deep, and are so complicated and interwoven, that they require much art to search and to distinguish them: nay, do often mock the most subtil inquisitor, and send him back with mere conjectures and uncertain guesses: So in this *Epidemick* Spiritual distemper, the *malady* is notorious and visible, but the *causes* of it not so easily determin'd, yet that not so much from the darkness as the number of them; so many do pretend, and that with very good colour, to this unhappy, this monstrous birth, that a *Solomon* himself must have made the proposal of dividing it, as not being able to have assign'd it entire to any one Mother.

2. Indeed so many are the concurrents towards it, that it would far exceed the limits of this little Tract, but to point at them: I shall not therefore

fore undertake any ſuch *exact* enumeration, but ſhall only take notice of thoſe which either for the generality or degree of their efficacy appear the moſt *eminent*.

3. And firſt the great and ſtupid *Inconſideration* which moſt men have concerning their Religion, may well paſs for a main cauſe of its fruſtration. *Chriſtianity* may make *Archimedes* his *challenge*; give it but where it may ſet its foot; allow but a ſober advertence to its propoſals, and it will move the whole *world*: It comes with moſt invincible and controuling arguments, but ſtill they are arguments, and thoſe muſt firſt obtain *attention*, before they can force *aſſent*; they will moſt infallibly weigh down the *ſcales*, though the whole world were the *counter-balance*; but then that muſt preſuppoſe their being put into thoſe Scales; their being entertain'd with ſo much of deliberation, as may try and examine their weight. In a word, they addreſs to us as men, that is, *creatures* endued by God with *rational* Souls and diſcurſive faculties; but if we will ſuppreſs theſe, and ſet up only the *brute* to give audience, we muſt not expect *Balaams* prodigy ſhould be every day repeated, that the *beaſt* ſhould be wiſer than the *rider*, and conſequently cannot wonder if the Succeſs vary with the Auditors. *First of Inconſideration.*

4. And 'tis to be fear'd, that this is the ſtate of moſt of us, that all the convincing *Logick*, that *demonſtration of the Spirit*, as S. *Paul* calls it, and all the perſwaſive *Rhetorick* of the Goſpel, find us ſo ſtupid and unconcern'd, that they can make no impreſſion: All the *avenues* are ſo blockt up, that they can find no way of approaching us. We are like the *Indian* Serpents *Philoſtratus* mentions, proof againſt all charms, but ſuch as with their glittering ſplendor aſſault our Eyes: Nothing moves us but what courts our Senſes, and what is not *groſs enough* to be ſeen, we think *too nice* to be conſider'd. The form and name of Chriſtianity men find ready to their hands, and it coſts them no labour to put it on: But ſhould they be interrogated of the import and ſignificancy of it, I fear many would be at a loſs what to anſwer. Men call themſelves *Chriſtians* as they do *French* or *Engliſh*, only becauſe they were born within ſuch a Territory, take up their *Religion* as a part of their *fate*, the temper of their *Climate*, the entail of their *Anceſtors*, or any thing moſt remote from their choice; the profeſſion of it deſcends to them by way of inheritance, and like young careleſs Heirs, they never are at the charge to ſurvey it, to inform themſelves either of the Iſſues or Revenues of it; what burdens it lays, or what advantages it promiſes. Every man ſees they are vaſt multitudes that have entered the *Baptiſmal* vow, and I fear no ſmall numbers of them, that weigh it as little when they ſhould *perform* it, as they did when they *made* it. Have no other notion of *Baptiſm*, but as a *cuſtom* of the place, or a *time* of feſtivity: Conſider no farther ſignificancy in theſe ſpiritual bands, than they do in the Swadling-cloaths of their infancy, and can give no better account why they took on them *Chriſts livery*, than why they wear ſuch *garments* as the *common faſhion* of their Country preſcribes them. *Religion taken up upon truſt.*

5. This is in many the effect of groſs ignorance, that really know nothing that borders upon Religion: And where that is the *principle*, we cannot think it ſtrange to ſee their *practices* proportionable; this returns them into the ſtate of *Heatheniſm*, and while they walk in that darkneſs, it is no wonder if they often fall: The only matter of admiration is, that there ſhould be any ſuch darkneſs among us; that *the glorious light*, as S. *Paul* terms it, *of the Goſpel of Chriſt*, ſhould not long ere this have diſpell'd it out of our *Horizon*, and certainly, that it has not, muſt be owing to ſome very great guilt, ſo that concerning ſuch perſons the Diſciples queſtion, *Joh.* 9. *Peoples ignorance proceeds from want of pious Education in ſome;*

is very pertinent, *Who did sin, this man or his Parents?* Where men are so ignorant, it must necessarily infer their *Parents* negligence in infusing, or their *own* stubborn perverseness in resisting instruction: But 'tis more probable to conclude the former, since if Children were early instituted, knowledge would insensibly insinuate it self, before their years had arm'd them with obstinacy enough to make head against it: But when by the Parents remisseness the proper Seeds-time is lost, the soil grows stiff and untractable; the *labour* of learning averts their Childhood, and the *shame* of it their Manhood, and so they grow old in their ignorance, are ready to *leave* this world before they come to *know* any thing of that which is to succeed it. This is a *common*, but certainly, a most *deplorable* case; and as it loudly accuses those Parents, who thus wretchedly hazard their Childrens greatest concernments, so certainly it reflects not very laudably upon those, who by slighting that excellent Order of *Confirmation* in this Church, have besides all other advantages of it, robb'd them of that happy reserve, which the care of their *Spiritual* Parent had provided to repair the negligence of their *Natural*; but guilt has a miserable kind of infinity, and lessens not by being communicated; and therefore though these unknowing persons may with justice enough *accuse* others, yet can they never the more *absolve* themselves. Indeed they cannot tax others omissions towards them, without a tacit reproach of their own: For if it were a fault in the *Parent*, to let their infancy want those necessary infusions, 'tis surely so in *themselves*, to let their riper years continue in that destitution. And sure 'tis not probable there could be a more irrational motive to the *former*, than that which prevails with the *latter*, to wit, the fear of shame, which certainly much more properly belongs to him that lies stupidly under his want, than he that industriously sets to cure it: So that while they go thus preposterously to *avert* reproach, they invite it; nay, and do besides betray one of their most important secrets, discover themselves more solicitous about *appearances* than *realities*; to be *thought* knowing than to *be* so. A strange kind of *speculative* Hypocrisie, which yet leads to all the *practical* profaneness incident to those, *who live without God in the world.*

And personal sloth and negligence in others;

6. But would God the uncatechiz'd were the only persons we had to complain of in this matter: There is another sort as *ignorant*, who have not that plea; who by a wretchless *Inconsideration*, have made a shift to *unlearn* what they had once been *taught*. That this is naturally very possible no man can question, that observes how *desuetude* will rob a man of any Science, or other habit. But in this case there is yet a farther concurrent towards it; Christs parable tells us of *Fowls that devoured the Seed*, which himself interprets to be the *wicked one*, which catcheth away the word sown in mens hearts: When that spiritual seed lies loose and scatter'd upon the surface, and is not by deep and serious meditation harrowed, as it were, into the ground, it offers it self a ready prey to the devourer, and God knows the *event* is too ready to attest the *truth* of the observation: For we do not see *many* whose childhoods have wanted nothing of Christian nurture, that have had all advantages to the making them *wise unto salvation*, yet suffer their manhood to wear out and obliterate all those *rudiments* of their youth; and that not only out of their *practice*, but even out of their *memory* too: This (would we be patient to have the experiment made) would, I doubt not, be found true in divers, and they would appear less able to approve themselves, not only to the *Confessor*, but even to the *Catechist* in their *adult age*, than they were in their *Minority*; as having scarce ever thought of the principles of their religion, since they conn'd them

them to avoid correction; and then 'tis no wonder if they paſs into the ſame *forgetfulneſs* with other the occurrences of that *ſlippery* age.

And want of making a particular Application of the Articles of our Creed.

7. But if with ſome the *memory* have been ſo invincibly *faithful*, as not to have reſign'd its *depoſitum*; if it do happen obſtinately to retain thoſe early impreſſions which were made on it; yet alas! that alone will be of little avail: 'Tis true, that is the ſtore-houſe, and 'tis good to have that well repleniſht; but if its *plenty* be only within it ſelf, uncommunicated; if the *granary*, though never ſo full, be ſeal'd up, it gives no ſecurity againſt a *famine*: A mans remembrance of his *Creed* may tell him there is a *God*, and that he is Almighty; but if his reaſon be ſo much aſleep, as not to infer from thence the neceſſity of reverencing and obeying him who is all-powerful to revenge our contempts, he may repeat the *Article* every day, and yet nevertheleſs *Atheiſtically*. In like manner he may go on to the Birth, Death, and Reſurrection of Chriſt; but if he weigh not the obligations to gratitude and duty, which devolve on him from thence, he may remember his *Birth*, and yet never be *regenerate*: His *Death*, and yet not *die to ſin*; and his *Reſurrection*, and yet *lie rotting* in his own *corruption*, and not riſe with him to *newneſs of life*. So he may proceed to his *coming to judge the quick and the dead*: but if he reflect not on his own particular concernment in it; if he conſider not that *for every the ſecreteſt thing*, Eccl. 11. *God will bring him*, as well as others, *to judgment*; he may talk of *Dooms-day* as men do of ſuch *Aſſizes* as they have no Trial at, but it will never ſet him a trembling, or give him the providence to anticipate his ſentence; ſo judge himſelf here, that he may not be judged of the Lord. And ſo proportionably in all the parts of our Chriſtian Faith: He that does not extract from them their proper and juſt inferences, ſhall never feel their efficacy. He has indeed in that excellent *Syſteme*, a moſt infallible *Catholicon*, againſt all his ſpiritual Maladies; but 'tis a Medicine, not a Charm; to be taken, not laid by him; and if he fail in *application*, he will as certainly miſs of the *cure*: And this gives us one too clear a reaſon, why *ſo many*, in the moſt fatal ſence, *are ſick and weak among us, and ſaln aſleep*, are firſt *lethargick*, and then ſtark *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*. Men do not by ſober conſideration ſuck out the vertue which would heal them: They look on the Creed as *Chriſts badge*, and ſo long as they bear that, they think none muſt queſtion their *Chriſtianity*: Whereas 'tis indeed more properly his Military *Symbolum*, or recognition of the Cauſe, and General they fight for; an engaging them to all the obedience, fidelity and conſtancy of reſolute Souldiers: And to this purpoſe it is that we *ſtand up* at the recital of the Creed, as owning our Baptiſmal promiſe, to *fight* manfully under our Saviours *Banner* againſt *Sin*, the *World*, and the *Devil*; and if we do not thus, 'tis not material what profeſſions we make, we are the ſame deſertors whether we *ſtay* in our own Camp, or *run* over to the enemies; *throw away* our Arms, or *not uſe* them; *renounce* our Chriſtian faith, or not *improve* it. Sloth is as miſchievous in war as treachery or cowardize, and he that keeps his *ſword* in the *ſheath*, is as unformidable an enemy, as he that brings *none* into the *field*.

Chriſtians grown ſo careleſs and ſecure.

8. And how many ſuch inſignificant *Combatants* are there in the Chriſtian Camp, that only lend their *Names* to fill up the *Muſter-roll*, but never dream of going upon *ſervice*? 'Tis certain there are as many ſuch, as there are careleſs unconſidering Profeſſors: And theſe, 'tis to be fear'd, make ſo great a number, that were the Church put to eſtimate her *forces*, and examine what effectively her *ſtrength* is, ſhe would find the deceit

of *false musters* as great among the *Spiritual* as the *Civil* Souldiery. It is indeed a most amazing thing to see, that that which is the one great and important interest of all men, should of all other things meet with the least regard. If we make a proposal of worldly profit, though incumber'd with many difficulties, and liable to many uncertainties, we shall not only have an attentive hearing, but active care and diligent pursuit of the design; it will be driven to the last glimpse of hope; and if the first attempt miscarry, the next occasion is laid hold of; but here, where the *prize* is so rich, the *conditions* so easie, the *acquist* so certain, yet (as if these were deterring, averting qualities) we cannot be got to take the matter into our deliberation. Alas, what stupid folly has possest men? And by what *measures* do they make their *estimates*? How are their precious Souls become so vile in their eyes, that they are the only part of them, which they think below their regard? In an *Epidemick* disease every man looks out for *Antidote* or Medicine for his own peculiar, and does not acquiesce in that silly confidence that he shall do as well as other men: Yet in this greater danger, that is their avowed comfort, and keeps them as chearful as if they had the most solid grounds of security. Alas, can numbers *out-face* damnation? or do men hope that by going in troops to Hell they shall *master* the native inhabitants, *subdue* those legions of tormentors, and become *conquerers* instead of *sufferers*? This is sure too wild an imagination for any to entertain, yet what more sober one can any pretend, in favour of so stupendous an improvidence?

Ought to consider their danger.

9. But 'twill be much more seasonable to *reform* than *Apologize* or *Rhetoricate*; and therefore 'twill import those men, who like the inhabitants of *Laish*, dwell *careless*, quiet, and secure, to look about them; to enter into *serious* consultation how they may avert that ruine which waits upon such a supine temper; not to suffer themselves to perish in the midst of such possibilities, nay solicitations to be saved: But at last afford an audience to that Embassie which is sent them from Heaven. Ponder well those *easie* terms of reconciliation which are propos'd: The *inestimable advantages* consequent to the embracing that amity; and the as *inestimable detriment* of refusing it: In a word, not to please themselves with the *empty title*, but to penetrate the *full purport* and significancy of their Christianity, and when they have done this soberly and attentively; having removed this first and most general obstruction to piety, they will find themselves assaulted by such force of *reason*, that they must either be very ill *Logicians*, or very good *Christians*.

CHAP. IV.

A Survey of the Mischiefs arising from Partial Consideration.

Partial consideration.

1. NEXT to the *stupid* and merely vegetable state of total incogitancy, we may rank that *partial* and peece-meal consideration, by which Christianity is mutilated and deform'd, depriv'd of all its force to attract and subdue mens hearts: for as in *artificial* Movements, there is such a dependence of one part upon another, that the substracting of any one destroys the whole frame: So in this *spiritual* Machin design'd to raise our dull mortality to Heaven, the divine wisdom of its maker has combin'd its several parts, that he who severs, ruines; he that applies it not in its united strength, will find no aid from its unjoynted scattered particles. *S. Paul* tells

tells us, 1 *Cor.* 12. that in the natural body, the making it all Eye, or Hand, the reducing the many members to one, is deſtructive to its being: (if they were all one member where were the body, *verſe* 20.) and we in reaſon muſt expect the ſame event will follow here. If we advance one part of our Chriſtian Faith to the annihilation of the reſt, 'tis impoſſible that ſhould ſupply the place of the whole; but the more that member is ſwoln above its native ſize, the more *unwieldy*, not the more *ſtrong* it grows; and loſes that active vigor, which is receiv'd by a ſocial communication with the other parts.

2. 'Tis God's charge againſt the *Prieſts*, *Mal.* 2. that *they have been partial in the Law*, נשאתם פנים lifters up of faces in it; prefer'd *ſome* more agreeable parts, and diſcountenanc'd *others*; were not *only* judges of the Law, but *unjuſt* judges too. And I fear the endictment may now run more generally againſt the people alſo; that they have been partial in the Goſpel; culled and choſen out thoſe ſofter and more gentle dictates which ſhould leſs grate and diſturb them: Like well the *Oil* that makes them have a chearful countenance, but are not ſo forward to deal with the *Wine* which ſhould ſearch and cleanſe their ſores. We make all our addreſſes to the *promiſes*, hug and careſs them, and in the interim, let the *commands* ſtand by neglected. A *divinity* indeed fitly apportion'd to the devotion of *theſe times*, which loves to make an *offering to God of that which coſts them nothing*, and yields a preference to that way of *worſhip* which aſſures Salvation *beſt cheap*, and at the *eaſieſt terms*; but would men conſider, they would find, that the *commands* are the ſupreme and moſt eminent part of the *Evangelical Covenant*, the *promiſes* come but as *handmaids* and attendants: An honourable retinue to invite the more reſpectful entertainment, and it ſhould be remembred that of this *ſort* are the *threatnings* too; and therefore they have ſurely an equal right to our regard, eſpecially when many of them have the acceſſion of God's *Oath*, to bind and ſtrengthen their *performance*. And what a ſcandalous and abſurd partiality is this, that when the precepts come with this ſolemnity, the more to command our reverence, we ſingle out this one part of the Train and pay our homage unto it; lay hold on the *Promiſes*, not thoſe that ſpeak *damnation* to impenitence, but the other half of them which give *aſſurances* of favour. And like the *Benjamites* to the daughters of *Shiloh*, run away with them, poſſeſs our ſelves of theſe by rape, in ſpight of all the incapacities we lye under; though God has ſworn, that no diſobedient provoker ſhall enter into his reſt. *Touching the Promiſes of God.*

3. That this is really the caſe of many is more than probable; for by what other artifice is it poſſible for them to reconcile their large hopes, with their no purifying; their confident expectations of Heaven, with their greedy rapacious purſuits of Earth; their ſecure dependence on the Bloud of their *Saviour*, with their remorſeleſs effuſions of that of their *Brethren*? Did they conſider the inſeparable *connexion* between the Precepts and the Promiſes, 'twere hard for them to be ſo *wicked*, but impoſſible to be ſo *ſanguine*. Did the *unclean* perſon believe that none but *the pure in heart ſhall ſee God*, if he could be ſo much *Swine*, as ſtill to chuſe the *mire*; yet ſure he could not expect to be rapt from thence into Heaven. Did the *Drunkard* conſider the ſentence of the Apoſtle *excluding all ſuch from the Kingdom of God*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. if he can be content ſo ſadly to over-buy this ſin; as to pay that Kingdom for his ſhot; yet certainly even he cannot be ſot enough to expect the poſſeſſion of what he has ſo ſold, or hope that from one of his drunken *trances*, he ſhall *awake* to *glory*. Did the *Covetous* extortioner *Encourageth to preſume on Gods goodneſs.*

extortioner observe that he is involv'd in the same sentence, remember that such Violents *shall take*, not *heaven*, but *hell, by force*; if the terrors of the Lord could not have force enough to melt his bowels, to unclutch his griping hand, or disseize him of his prey: Yet sure it must discourage him from grasping of Heaven too, from hoping to defraud *God* as he has done *men*, and striking himself into an estate in the land of the living: And in like manner all other hoping sinners if they would ruine, yet must cease from flattering themselves, must chuse *damnation* bare-fac'd, and not fancy that their posting on in the broad way shall ever bring them to *life*. And sure this discovery of their estate, were a very good step to the curing it: For though 'tis possible some few may be of so *sturdy* an impiety, as to chuse their *sin* with all its consequents; yet sure all sinners are not of that strong complexion, and therefore *Satan* is put to his wiles and artifices, is fain to *hoodwink* those that are apt to *start*; and disguises the danger when he sees the true appearance of it will terrifie and avert. This was his *old* policy with our *first* parents; he dazles their eyes with the *glorious*, but *abusive* proposal of becoming like *Gods*, that they might not discern how near they were approaching to become like *Devils*: And this under the pretence of confidence and friendship, discovering, as it were, a secret to them, that God envied them that promotion, which his greater kindness was solicitous to procure for them. And as if the ruine of mankind, in *Massa*, had been too slight a *Trophy* for that one stratagem, he repeats it again to the individuals, perswades men that the path of obedience which God has chalkt out is strait, and narrow, rugged and incumbred; that there is a shorter cut, an easier passage to life: That they may be led into *Canaan* a nearer way, step into it immediately from the flesh-pots of *Egypt*, and scape the tedious weary March in the Wilderness: never so much as call at Mount *Sinai*, or be affrighted with the *Thunders of the Law*. In a word, they need not *work out their Salvation*, but be they never so slothful, *they may inherit the Promises, Heb.* 6. 12. this is his one grand *Conclusion*, though he has several *mediums* to infer it by: Wherewith as with so many *tools* and Engines he furnishes men for the *filing* or breaking of that sacred link between duty and reward; and of these he has great variety fitted to the hands, and skill of those that manage them. I shall not undertake to ransack his *work-house*, or give an inventory of his *Utensils*, but shall rather in general beseech all those, who have made this unhappy separation, to remember from whose *Forge* they took their *Instruments*; and then consider whether his officiousness in supplying them, can argue any thing but that 'tis his work they are about. Can any think that he, whose eternal pastime it will be to torment men, can really be solicitous of their ease; that he would chuse out for them the *pleasantest paths*, were it not that he knows they lead to the *chambers of death*? When *Christ* whose sole business it was to save mens Souls, has prescribed us a *course* which shall assuredly conduct us unto *happiness*, what can it be but frenzy to resort to *Abaddon*, the destroyer, for an easier *method*, or expect more *gentleness* and compassion from the *roaring Lion* than from the *Lamb of God*?

And doubt of his faithfulness.

4. Nay indeed this is not only to attribute to him more tenderness, but fidelity too: To believe him in opposition to all the express affirmations of God; and when he who is truth it self has told us, that *except we repent we shall all perish, Luke* 13. 6. and that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb.* 12. 14. to disbelieve this only upon his bare credit, who was a lyar from the beginning: This indeed is a prodigious composition of blasphemy and folly; a strange contumely to *God*, but fatal treachery to our

selves:

ſelves : For alas! Satan entertains us all this while but with a trick of *Leger-demain*, and as *Juglers* make us believe we have cut the *ſtring*, which yet preſently after they ſhew us *whole* ; ſo he perſwades us he has thus ſever'd the *Condition* from the *Promiſes*, when to our grief it will finally appear their union was *inviolable*. 'Tis not all our vain confidence that can reverſe the immutable divine Law ; we may, 'tis true, delude our ſelves, keep up our ſpirits high ; in a ſecure jollity *eat and drink, and riſe up to play*, and ſo not only loyter, but revel out our *day*, till the *night* overtake us *wherein no man can work* ; but we ſhall never be able to propagate the deceit, where only it could avail us ; to perſwade God to pay the *hire* to thoſe that have been no labourers, or give the *prize* to any who have not run to obtain it. Let every man therefore in a juſt tenderneſs to his own Soul, ſtrictly examine his hopes, try, not how *high* they towre, but how *deep* they are founded ; whether on the *ſand* or on the *rock* ; the flattering deluſions of Satan, and the dreams of his own Fancy, or on the Promiſes of God : For though all pretend to build on the latter, yet God knows, a multitude of fooliſh *Architects* there are, which miſtake their ground, take that for aſſurance that is not : And this truly is a thing deſerves to be ſoberly conſider'd ; they that moſt greedily catch at the Promiſes, do often embrace a *cloud* inſtead of the *Deity* which they ſo eagerly graſp, and thereby think to enjoy. But *faithful* obedience, and not *inſolent* hopes commend us unto God. The Goſpel indeed deſcribes to us great and ineſtimable *felicities* ; but he that can think this gives him *Title* to them, may as well pretend to the whole *World*, becauſe he has the *Map* of it in his houſe : For though it mentions them to all, yet it promiſes them to none but the obedient. And thoſe *Iſraelites* which fled from the ſight of *Goliah*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 25. might as reaſonably challenge the reward propos'd to the Victor, as men can pretend to enter into life without keeping the Commandments : This then is the one *Criterion*, by which a man may judge of his hopes ; if they be but proportionable to his obedience, they are then regular, and ſuch as will not make him aſham'd, but prove incentives and engagements to every good work. Let him obey as much as he can, and then he need not deny himſelf the comfort of hoping as much as he can too. But if his *hopes* exceed this meaſure, and ſquare themſelves only by his *wiſhes* ; if he look for Heaven, not becauſe he is *qualified* for it, but becauſe he wants or *covets* it ; this is rather to dream than hope, and ſuch *whimſies* will as ſoon inveſt the beggar in *wealth*, the defam'd in *honour*, the ſick in *health*, or any man in any thing he has but a mind to, as compaſs *Heaven* for the bold *Fiduciary*.

Folly to hope for Heaven while we be unqualified for it.

5. It is indeed like thoſe *Lunacies* wherein mens fancies adopt them Heirs to thoſe Kingdoms they know nothing more of, than the names ; and ſure the Analogy holds as well in the *cure* as the *diſeaſe* : Let theſe *Patients* a-while be kept dark, taken from the dazling contemplations of their imaginary priviledges, to the ſad reflection on their ſins : and as God expoſtulates with *Iſrael*, Ezek. 33. 26. *Ye ſtand upon the ſword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every man his neighbours wife, and ſhall ye poſſeſs the land?* So let them recite to themſelves the Catalogues of their impieties, and then ask their own hearts, whether theſe be the qualifications of thoſe that ſhall reſt in God's holy Hill ? Whether theſe marks of the *Beaſt* can ever rank them among the followers of the *Lamb* ? And let theſe Conſiderations be preſt home, reiterated ſo often, till by repeated ſtrokes they have made good the other part of the method, made their Souls bleed, and by that Spiritual *Phlebotomy*, temper'd their ſwelling veins, allayed the over-ſanguineſs

ness of their constitution: And then there remains but one thing more to complete the course, and that is bringing them into the *Work-house*, setting them really to *work out* their *salvation with fear and trembling*, which they had so near played away by confidence and presumption: And when they have done thus, they have verified their hopes, and then may safely re-assume them: They are return'd again with advantage to their first point, and are that in *soberness* and *reality*, which they then were only in *fiction* and *imagination*.

How to judge of sound Doctrine.

6. And now would God men would once be content to be thus disabus'd; that they would not be so in love with deceit, as in the Prophets phrase, *Jer.* 8. 5. to *hold it fast*: That they would not chuse *Chimæra's* and *fantastick* Images before *real* and *substantial* Felicities; and prefer that hope which will be sure to *shipwrack* them, before that which will be *an Anchor of the Soul, sure and stedfast*, *Heb.* 6. 19. and if this so reasonable a proposal may be embrac'd; if the World should, as the *Spaniard* said, but *rise wise one morning*, what a deal of dead merchandize would Satan have upon his hands? Many of those they call the comfortable Doctrines would want vent, which are now the staple commodity of his Kingdom. What those are, 'tis no part of my design to examine, it will be every mans particular concern to do it for himself; which he may do by this one test; whether they more animate men to *hope* well, than to *live* well? Whether they bring *Alexanders* sword to cut asunder the *Gordian* knot, to sever between the promise and the condition? Or the sword of the *Spirit* to subdue all to the obedience of Christ? If the former, we may expect the fruits of such will be all that licentiousness which S. *Paul* describes, as *the works of the flesh*, *Gal.* 5. 19. it being not to be imagin'd, that the *precepts* of the Gospel, which they divide from the *promises* only, that they might fall off, shall then be *voluntarily* taken up in mere good nature and heroick Generosity; that those who are so industrious to avoid the necessity of *Christian practice*, will make it their *free-will-offering*. If there should happen to be some few of so ingenuous a gratitude; yet 'tis certain, that is not our common mould; few men will be better than they think their interest bids them be, and therefore such principles are dangerous Seminaries of *Libertinism*: And 'tis mens very important concernment not to admit them. Let not then their chearful *aspect* recommend them to our *embraces*; men may be kill'd with too much *Cordial*; that which seems to refresh the *Spirits* may enflame the *Bloud*, and though *cold poisons* have gotten the fame of being the most *malignant*, yet there are *hot* that are as infallibly *mortiferous*. Let it be our care in opposition to both, to keep our selves in that moderate, equal temper, which belongs to *healthy* Souls: And since that is the vitallest heat which is gotten by exercise, set to our business, employ our selves diligently in all those duties the Gospel exacts, and then we shall not want such an hope as may warm our hearts, keep us in a chearful expectation, till we come to the glorious fruition of that *Eternal Salvation which God has promised to all them, and only them that obey him.* And till we do thus, till we consider as well what we are to *do*, as what we are to *receive*; there will be no hope of restoring Christianity to its native vigour: We shall make it evaporate all its strength in *unsignificant hopes*, convert it into Air, to bear up our Bubbles, instead of that *firm ground*, whereon we should build *vertue* here, and *glory* hereafter.

CHAP. V.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Carnal Conſideration.

1. AFTER the diſadvantages of *Partial* Conſideration, may fairly be ſubjoyn'd the ills of that advertency, which is impregnated by *ſenſuality* and ſloth, and makes pretence unto right *reaſon*, but tends indeed as much as any thing to the fruſtrating the deſign, and enfeebling the force of our Religion: Such cloſe *reſerves* of deceit and malice have men to their own Souls, that when they quit *one* ſtrong hold of Satans, 'tis only to retreat to *another*. When they are not ſo *briſk* and Aerial, as lightly to skip over thoſe precepts that lye in their way, they are ſo *groſs* and unwary as to fall at them; if they may not paſs for Straws and Chaffe, ſuch as every blaſt of vain confidence may blow away, they ſhall then be improved into Heaps and Mountains, become ſtones of ſtumbling and rocks of offence; and when they are call'd upon to Conſider them, they do it in ſo perverſe a manner, as if they meant to revenge themſelves on that unwelcome importunity: Their *conſideration* is worſe than *neglect*. They look into them inſidiouſly, not as *Diſciples*, but as *Spies*; not to weigh the obligingneſs, but to quarrel the unreaſonableneſs or difficulty of the injunctions, not to direct their *practice*, but excuſe their *prevarications*. *Carnal conſideration an enemy to Religion:*

2. From this unſincere kind of inſpection it is, that the *Precepts* have got ſo formidable appearance with many, that they have fallen under ſuch heavy prejudices, as to reſolve them intolerable yokes, inſuperable tasks: that this *Canaan* is a land that eats up its inhabitants, wherein there is ſo little of *enjoyment*, that it ſcarce affords a *being*. Men count a *life* under ſuch reſtraints, ſo joyleſs and uneaſie, that it differs from *death* only, by being more *paſſive*. They think *Zeal* like a *Hectick Fever*, in a ſlow, but certainly fatal *Fire*, exhauſts and conſumes the *Spirits*. Mortification and *ſelf-denial* macerate and decay the *body*; and *liberality* diſſipates and waſtes the *eſtate*: And with theſe Apparitions, which themſelves have conjur'd up, men run frighted from duty, reſolve the burden is inſupportable, or at leaſt grievous to be born, and therefore as our Saviour ſays of the *Phariſees, will not touch it*, no not ſo much as *with one of their fingers*, *Mat.* 23. 4. never make any attempt to try what indeed they are; but take their meaſures from their own, or perhaps other mens prejudicate opinions, and thence take out an *Authentick Record* and *Patent* for ſloth, fancy the journey too long for them, and therefore ſit ſtill; firſt call Chriſts Commandments *grievous*, and then improve that ſlander into a *manumiſſion*; abſolve themſelves from obeying them. And unleſs they may have the Gate to life cut wider, made capacious enough to receive them with all their luſts about them; will never eſſay to enter it. *Begets hard thoughts of Gods commands.*

3. But if the *Prince of darkneſs* have enacted it a *Law*, that difficulty ſhall paſs for excuſe, yet if *real* uneaſineſs may be admitted to be as deterring as *imaginary* ones, his own decree will retort the moſt ruinouſly on himſelf, and men may plead it as their diſcharge from all thoſe baſe drudgeries, thoſe tyrannous impoſitions wherewith he loads them. The *Drunkard* may experimentally tell him the *pain* of an aking head, of an overcharged ſtomach, the *ruine* of a waſted Eſtate, and claim a diſpenſation from purſuing that uneaſie and coſtly ſin. The *Wanton* may bring his macerated body like the *Levites* Concubine, *Judg.* 19. and urge it as an evidence how cruel a Maſter he ſerves; and from thence emancipate and *Inconveniences of a wicked life.*

free himself: And indeed every sin carries in it so much of visible toil, or secret smart, as would by force of this rule supplant and undermine it self; and sure *Satan* would never have arm'd men with so dangerous a *weapon*, had he not discern'd them so in love with *slavery*, as secures him it should never be us'd against him; for if it should, nothing could give him a more mortal wound, more irrecoverably shake his Kingdom. Nor would only that *infernal Region* feel the force of that *destructive* principle; it would make as strange confusions in *secular Regiments*.

Strictness of the Law made an excuse for disobedience.

4. For if such *pleas* as these may be admitted, they will easily cancel all *Humane*, as well as *Divine* Laws, and every *malefactor* will transfer his *guilt* on the severity of the *Legislator*: The *Thief* may say it is too great a difficulty for him to resist the temptation of an apt *opportunity*; a rich prize, that his fingers are too slippery even for himself, and he cannot restrain them, and then quarrel the strictness of the *Law*, which has rais'd so high a fence about mens properties, that he who climbs it must endanger his *neck*. The *Rebel* may complain that the bands of *Allegiance* are too strait, the yoke sits too close, galls and frets his tender flesh, exclaim loudly at the *Tyranny* of those that laid it on, and in that out-cry drown the noise of his own *Treason*. And so every other transgressor may accuse the rule, as accessary to his swervings, till at last the *Laws* be made the only *Criminals*.

Ill consequences of that Principle.

5. I leave every man to judge both of the equity and consequences of such discoursings in *Civil* matters, and shall only desire he will apply them to *Spiritual* also, where certainly they are neither more just, nor less ruinous: And whilst such absurd *pretences* as these pass current, no wonder if *Christianity* languish and grow impotent, want strength to impress it self on the lives of its *professors*. The most infallible Receipt can work no cure on him, who upon the suspicion of its bitterness, refuses to taste it. The most excellent *Laws* must lose their regulating *power*, where the *execution* of them is obstructed; and we may as reasonably look for the efficacy of *Christianity* among those who never heard the *name*, as among those, who owning the *name*, do yet disclaim its *precepts*; and so all those interpretatively do, who by accusing them of too great rigour, avert both themselves and others from their Obedience.

Such men ill judges of Religion.

6. That the Charge is scandalously unjust will appear to any, who shall allow themselves the just means of information; but alas! the way of *Process* men take in this affair is so inequitable, as certainly presages the partiality of the *sentence*: What person ever was there so innocent, so excellent, who if arraign'd at the *Tribunal* of his mortal enemy, could be acquitted? *Christ* himself shall be pronounced a *Blasphemer*, when a *Caiphas* is to examine him: And no wonder if his *precepts* find proportionable dealing; if they be decried as *impossible*, *tyrannical*, perhaps *ridiculous* too, where the scanning of them is referred to those, whose interest it is to defame them. Men enthrone their *lusts*, set them up in the *judgment-seat*, and none can expect they shall pass such a *sentence*, as shall include their own *condemnation*: If they own the *commandment* to be *holy*, *just* and *good*, they must tacitly accuse *themselves* to be *impure*, *unjust* and *wicked*, and as such to be consign'd to wrath and judgment.

They beget prejudices against it,

7. Here then we have the true account how Christs *commands*, which are in themselves so *far* from grievous, have gotten so unkind a *reputation* among us; this is so direct a course for it, that we may cease our *wonder*, though not our *grief* to see it; for we behold them stand to the award of those with whom they have a profest enmity: The *Gaol* gives sentence on the Bench; the

the *Bar* arraigns the judgment-ſeat. Certainly when that Law which is *Spiritual* is ſubmitted to the arbitrement of groſs *carnality*, the Law of Liberty is taxed and rated by thoſe worſt *bondmen who are ſold under ſin*; 'tis impoſſible to find any fairer treatment. That which comes on purpoſe to dethrone ſin, diſpoſſeſs it of the Empire it has uſurpt, will certainly be entertain'd with the ſame *exclamation* the Devils us'd to Chriſt, *Why art thou come to torment us?* But as if this *general Antipathy* were not enough to aſcertain the rejection of Chriſts command; as if the *National* feud, as I may call it, between Heaven and Hell were not thought irreconcileable enough, men offer yet harder meaſure, call in the aid of *perſonal* quarrels, and when the precepts come to be conſider'd, refer each of them ſingle to that *particular* Vice to which it has the directeſt *contrariety*.

And make a wrong application of its commands.

8. Thus when Chriſts command of *meekneſs and forgiveneſs, of loving enemies, and turning the cheek, bearing the Croſs*, or *ſelf-denial* calls for audience; they conſult (as *Rehoboam* did with his young hot-ſpurs) with their anger and malice, their rancor and revenge, and they ſoon give their *Verdict*; that to be meek is to be *ſervile*, a temper fit only for the abject. That to forgive enemies is a principle of *cowardiſe* that would emaſculate the world; to love them a piece of *Spaniel-like fawning*; but to turn the Cheek; not only to hazard, but invite new injuries by owning them as benefits; paying bleſſing for curſes, kindneſs and good-turns for hatred, is ſuch a *ridiculous patience*, as muſt expoſe to the inſolence of many, and the ſcorn and deriſion of all men. And then the *reſolution* is ready, they will be no ſuch *fools* for Chriſts ſake. So when the precept of humility and lowlineſs comes to be conſider'd, their *Pride* is deputed to hear its plea, and then though it bring the authority of Chriſts *example* as well as his *command*, it will be judg'd invalid: *Chriſt* indeed *took upon him the form of a Servant*, and to that, humility was a proportionable *Adjunct:* But what is that to them whoſe aſpiring humour abhors ſubjection, 'tis not calculated for their *Meridian*, they are of another manner of Spirit, and would not have it embaſed by the admiſſion of ſo mean a quality: And though Chriſt hath put *poverty of Spirit* among his Beatitudes, they reſolve he ſhall not enſnare them with that *artifice*; they will not take his *meaſures* of felicity, or reſign that pleaſure they have in valuing themſelves, for any thing he propoſes in exchange. In like manner the precepts of temperance, ſobriety and chaſtity, are not permitted to the Judgment of ſober *reaſon*, nay, nor of mere natural *deſire*; but to *appetites* vitiated and inflam'd by radicated *habits*; and then the *Glutton* thinks, to eat moderately, is to be ſtarv'd; and will as ſoon *put a knife*, Prov. 23. *to his throat*, in the vulgar ſence of cutting it, as in *Solomons* notion of reſtraining his exceſs. Thus the *Drunkard* with his falſe thirſts looks on ſobriety as a kind of Hell, where he ſhall want *a drop to cool his tongue*, and thinks the abandoning his debaucht jollities is an implicit adieu to all the comforts of life. The *Unclean* perſon when his bloud is high, ſcoffs at Chaſtity as a religious kind of impotence, and only ſo far conſiders the *precept* of *pulling out the Eye*, as to infer that it were as eaſie literally to part with it, as to reſtrain its luſtful range; not look at all, as not look to luſt. And proportionably it fares with Charity and bounty, which though our *Saviour* recommend, *Mammon* arraigns of robbery, and ſtigmatizes as a *Thief* that picks the Purſe, and rifles Coffers. But amidſt all theſe, *the taking up the Croſs, ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake*, and *the doctrine of ſelf-denial*, fall under the heavieſt prejudice. Theſe are oppos'd not by ſome one ſingle vice, but the confederate arms of all; even thoſe, whoſe intereſts are flatly oppoſite,

do here unite: *Herod* and *Pilate*, *Sadducees* and *Pharisees* accord against Christ, and all are freely suffer'd, nay invited to exhibit their *complaints* against these *Mandates*. *Covetousness* cries out that this is the most ruinous prodigality, casts away an estate in a lump, and lays all open to forfeiture and confiscation: And *Prodigality* takes it as ill to be forestall'd, and have nothing left for it to dissipate. *Profaneness* avows a contempt of it as a folly, and most open madness to part with *real* pleasure for an *empty* name, or profit for that *Bankrupt thing* call'd Conscience: And *Hypocrisie* has a more secret hatred of it, as its detector; that which will bring it to a Test which it cannot pass. *Malice* puts in a *Caveat*, that this is to gratifie enemies, and lose the satisfactions of revenge: And *Self-Love* puts in another, that it is to destroy ones self. In short, every *limb* of the body of sin discharges a *blow* at this innocent and Divine Sanction; as if they meant it should exemplifie its own doctrine by assuming that passive temper it recommends.

Our lusts make us improper judges of our duty:

9. But alas, who can expect any more *upright* verdicts from such *packt*, such *corrupt* Juries, and why may not Christ be permitted to claim the common *benefit* of our *Laws*, to make his challenge and exceptions against this so incompetent *impanel*? 'Tis the counsel of the Wise man, not to advise in common affairs with those whose tempers may be suppos'd to bias them, *Consult not*, says he, *with a coward in matters of War, nor with a sluggard of much business*, *Ecclus.* 37. 11. and sure if they be ill *Counsellors*, they must be worse *Judges*: But why then do we set pride to judge of humility, lust of purity, covetousness of liberality; and make our *vices* the *arbitrators* of those *Laws* which should restrain them? This is such a gross *injustice* as common *humanity* abhors; we deal by other measures with men, the most notorious and flagitious criminals, and reserve this way of process for those things only wherein our God may be concern'd. 'Tis a severe exprobration of a profane people, *Malach.* 1. 8. where God accuses them for treating *him* with less reverence than they would do a *mortal* Prince. *Offer it* now *to thy Prince*: But alas! we shall force him to descend far lower in his expostulation, so far we are from paying him the *duty* and regard belonging to a *Prince*, that we yield him not the rights of *common* men; force him to stand to those measures which we think too inequitable to press upon a Murderer, a Thief, or Rebel at the Bar.

But Conscience is more equal or impartial in her judgment or verdict.

10. But this waving of common rules is a plain confession that we need more indulgence, than those will allow: When mens *lusts* thus usurp the *Tribunal*, and judge in their own cause, 'tis a palpable discovery they dare not remit themselves to any more equal determination. And indeed in this point of their interest, they pass a right judgment: For 'tis certain were the *case* referr'd to any competent Judge, indeed to *any* but *themselves*, they would inevitably be cast; and sure 'tis high time that some should assist *oppress vertue* in its appeal; find it out some *Court of equity* where its plea may be heard: And we need not travel *far* for that purpose, every man may do it in his own *breast*, where in his little *Common-wealth* he shall find a *Court* of Gods erecting: Let him but draw the Cause *thither*, discuss the matter in his own conscience; and he will soon find the former unrighteous sentences revers'd: Let him but seriously reflect on his *violations* of those sacred Precepts of Christ; and observe what a *sting* and secret remorse every such *breach* leaves within him: And that will be a competent attestation of the *equity* and obligingness of those Mandates: For from whence else can the regret arise? Those things that are either impossible in their nature, or unconcerning to us cannot beget it. No man accuses himself

himſelf for not flying in the *air*, or walking upon the *water*; nor owns himſelf *guilty* in the non-obſervance of any *Laws*, but ſuch as have *power* to oblige him: And therefore theſe cloſe pangs and checks of *Conſcience* are an irrefragable evidence, that men do *inwardly* aſſent to the juſtice and authority of thoſe divine *rules*, which their *actions*, yea often their *words* too, do moſt oppugn.

11. But over and above the throes and after-pains of conſcience, when ſin is brought forth, the ſelf-accuſation of the *Criminal*, when none beſide controuls, nay many flatter and commend; I ſay beyond this ſecondary and reflext *Apologie* for Chriſts Law owed to the foregoing prevarication of it; there is an early and immediate *verdict* paſt in its behalf, in the eſteem and liking which thoſe documents command, where e're they paſs: Creating an aſſent and veneration not only when obey'd, but from profeſt deſpiſers; who cannot chuſe but think well of that Vertue they deſert, and the neceſſity of their affairs compels them to ſpeak ill of. An event *viſible* in the condemnation of our Saviour, where the *Judge* who *gave ſentence* againſt him, at the ſame moment *waſht his hands*, and openly profeſt, *he found no fault in him.*

12. And indeed this very reflection on the *Author* of theſe precepts, if well conſider'd, would ſuperſede all other arguments. The *Mandates* of the Goſpel on this one ſcore, that they are Chriſts, are certainly both *pure* in themſelves, and *poſſible* to us: And ſo moſt worthy not only of all *obedience*, but all *love* too. He who is our *Lord* upon both the titles of *Creation* and *Redemption*, may certainly with all juſtice impoſe what laws he pleaſes on us. Yet he, who laid down his life for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions which were under the firſt Teſtament, cannot be imagin'd ſo inconſiderate of our frailty which himſelf had ſmarted for, as to introduce another of equal rigour, or be ſo prodigal of his bloud, as to pour it out for thoſe who by a new ſet of impoſſible commands ſhould infallibly reforfeit themſelves again: And if this cannot be ſuppos'd, the contrary may be concluded, that he hath ſo far condeſcended to our imbecillity, as not to *preſcribe* us any thing which he either finds or makes us not able to *perform*. 'Tis true indeed, his *Laws* are above the reach of our corrupt and debaſed *nature*; and they were unfit to be his, were they not ſo: But when he by his grace offers to elevate and refine this nature, bring it up to the pitch and purity of thoſe Laws, this is a far greater mercy than if he had deſcended to our corruption; ſo he might have contaminated himſelf, given laws unworthy of him: But alas! what advantage would it be to us, to have the *Blaſphemy* mention'd, *Pſal.* 50. ſo verified, to have our *God* in this ſence, *ſuch a one as our ſelves?* But by this other *Method* he purifies, and exalts us; puts us in a capacity of being *like unto him*, in which is ſumm'd up at once, all both *virtue* and *felicity.*

The precepts of Religion are poſſible to be perform'd.

13. And on this glorious *end*, every particular *command* of his has a direct aſpect, every one of them tending to *re-impreſs* on us ſome part of that divine *image* which was raz'd out by the *firſt ſin:* And this, one would think enough to recommend them to our higheſt value. Certainly, if *Conſcience* may be *Judge*, it will be ſo: There being in this caſe no middle between *devout* reverence, and *horrid* blaſphemy; for he that deſpiſes ſuch an *aſſimilation*, muſt neceſſarily alſo deſpiſe *him* who is ſo *reſembled:* He who thinks meekneſs, purity, humility, *&c. unamiable qualities*, can have little eſteem for him, in whom they are *tranſcendently eminent*, but will take the Prophet at his word, and ſay, *There is no form nor comelineſs in him, Eſ.* 53. But this ſure can never be the *Verdict* of Conſcience; he that can thus *pronounce*,

The end of Religion is to make us like God.

nounce, must be suppos'd to have suppreſt and *silenc'd* that. It being one of the moſt indelible *notions* there, that *all that is in God, is sublimely excellent.* But becauſe 'tis indeed too poſſible that Conſcience may be put under ſuch an undue reſtraint, ſuffer the violence of a *Priſoner*, when it ſhould ſuſtain the place of a *Judge*: Becauſe many men dare not permit their conſciences to ſpeak, leſt they ſhould ſay more than they are willing to hear. And laſtly, ſince theſe perſons make their appeal to reaſon, pretend the aids, and boaſt in the advantages of that, it may not be amiſs to bring the *Cauſe* unto that *Bar*, whoſe *Empire* and *Authority* none muſt diſclaim that own the *Style*, and leaſt of all thoſe *Scepticks* in Religion with whom we have to do; who will allow of no conviction but from it.

The duties of Religion are very agreeable to reaſon;

14. And *God*, who, as the Apoſtle ſays, *leaves not himſelf without witneſs*, has ſo temper'd and diſpos'd his *Precepts* as to qualifie them to paſs even this Teſt alſo, they being not the *contradictions* but *improvements* of natural Reaſon: And ſo moſt apt to recommend themſelves to all that is *Man*, not *Brute* about us. Indeed they have the very ſame aim and deſign with that. It has ever been the grand buſineſs of *ſober reaſon* firſt to diſcover, and then to attain that *one ſupreme good*, which would give reſt and felicity to the Soul: In this inquiſition have the *Philoſophers* and greateſt Maſters of Reaſon, laid out their moſt ſerious ſtudies and deepeſt contemplations; and in their indefatigable purſuits ſeem joyntly to ſigh out *David*'s queſtion, *Who will ſhew us any good?* And now the *Goſpel* comes a ſolution of this ſo important a Query, *brings theſe glad tidings of joy* to all people, and that not only in its *credenda*, by informing us what that *good* is; but in its *agenda* too, by tracing us out the *way* to it; beating us a path which will certainly lead us to that *ſummum bonum* which our very *nature* implicitly gaſps after: And ſure *reaſon* can never jar with *this*, which comes thus as a happy *Auxiliary* to ſuccour its impotence: As an infallible *guide* to conduct its ſteps: and as a glorious *light* to give it a clear view of what it before blindly groped after. 'Tis a certain Indication of *madneſs*, to *tear* and miſchief thoſe things that would be uſeful to us, to curſe and revile a friend, or fly in the face of thoſe whoſe charity brings them to our aid; and therefore 'tis moſt evident that *reaſon* muſt firſt ceaſe to be reaſon, and commence *frenzie*, before 'tis poſſible it can ſet it ſelf in defiance of thoſe Laws of Chriſt, which are thus accommodated to its greateſt Intereſts.

And lay a reſtraint on our Paſſions.

15. And as the accord is thus obſervable in the *ultimate*, ſo is it in the *intermediate* deſign alſo. *Reaſon* had by its twilight diſcern'd, that that Soveraign *bliſs* it aim'd at, would never be hit by an unſteady hand; by him who was perpetually toſſed and agitated by his turbulent inordinate appetites. Therefore young men, yet in the heat and ferment of their bloud, were ſolemnly proſcrib'd and baniſht from the Schools and Lectures of *Philoſophy*; therefore luſtrations and *Catharticks* of the mind were ſought for, and all endeavour us'd to calm and regulate the *fury*, if not extirpate (which ſome contended for) the very *being* of the Paſſions: that ſo a preparation might be made, *firſt* for the knowledge, and *then* the attainment of felicity: Now the *Goſpel-precepts* have viſibly the ſame *end* and purpoſe: Every one of them expreſly ſingling out ſome irregular affection to combate and ſubdue: So that *right reaſon* and *they* are evidently of a *Sect* and Party, inſomuch that ſeveral of the ancienteſt Fathers of the Church attributed the excellent documents of *Heathen Philoſophers* to the *Divine* λόγος, the reaſon and eſſential *Word of God* which after was *incarnate* upon Earth; and brought auxiliary ſtrengths of *grace*, to aid the weakneſſes of *nature*. The bleſſed *Jeſus* whoſe bare word *checkt the Sea* in its higheſt fury, and by

that

that Miracle atteſted his Divinity; as much exerts himſelf in ſilencing the louder Tempeſts, and calming the inteſtine ſtorms within our breaſts. And certainly *reaſon* will not quarrel to have been thus reliev'd, it being the *property* only of proud *folly* to chuſe rather to *loſe* a victory, than *owe* it to the aid of an Allie.

Several duties inſtanc'd in, and firſt of meekneſs.

16. From this general view, it were eaſie to deſcend to obſerve the exact concurrrence of particulars. God loves *a reaſonable ſervice*, and has ſo temper'd his commands, that every Act of obedience we perform may be ſo qualified, and gain unto its votaries the *Elogium* promis'd in the Law of *Moſes*, Deut. 4, 9. *Surely this people is a wiſe and underſtanding People.* And firſt that the command of *Meekneſs* is a moſt *rational* Precept, can never be doubted by any, who remember but the common definition of *Anger*, that it is *Furor brevis*, and ſure 'tis very reaſonable not to be mad; and he that has obſerv'd the unmanly tranſportations of that wild paſſion, how that the firſt violence it offers is to the man within him, will certainly think it the intereſt, not only of his *Religion*, but common prudence, and right *Reaſon* to ſuppreſs it. And the like is to be ſaid of the more ſolemn *Frenzie* of deep malice and deliberate *Revenge*, where the fury wants the allay of being tranſient and ſhort-liv'd, is embodied into Complexion and temper, and grows inveterate into Nature. *Anger* indeed is a *fire*, and he that touches it, though but lightly, will find it *ſcorch* him: But the *Malicious* lays himſelf as it were to *roaſt* at it; prolongs and ſpins out his own *Torment*, as if he meant to anticipate his *puniſhment* in his very crime, and commence his *Hell* here, *in unquenchable fire*. Truly no *ſin* does more repreſent that ſtate of horror to which it tends; it gives a man not only a certain *title*, but an ample *earneſt*, pays him part in hand of thoſe diſmal wages. This was ſo well underſtood even by the *Heathens*, that we ſee the *Poets* knew not how more *emphatically* to deſcribe the future *torment* of an envious and malicious perſon, than by the repreſentation of his *ſin*. *Prometheus's Vultur* begins her quarry in this life; every malignant *thought*, every ſpightful *wiſh* preys upon his *heart* that harbours it: Every revengeful project puts him in the pangs of labour till it be brought forth; and when it is, it commonly rebounds ſo miſchievouſly upon the Parent, that the birth ſeems like that of *Agrippina*, when ſhe bare *Nero* that murder'd her. And ſurely not only *reaſon*, but common *ſenſe* will ſay this is a ſtate to be deteſted, and conſequently muſt give its ſuffrage to thoſe Laws of Meekneſs and Charity, which are the only expedients to prevent it. *Peace* is deſervedly reckon'd among the *higheſt bleſſings* of Communities, and ſure it has a proportionable value in every ſingle member of thoſe greater bodies, it being that which is indiſpenſibly requiſite to the enjoying of any other good. A *War* we know interrupts at once all the *profits* and *pleaſures* of a Nation: And this hoſtile *temper* in a mans mind does the very ſame, and like *Choler* in the ſtomach, takes off all *guſt* of the moſt delightful things, and ſo becomes a *Hell* in the *pœna damni*, as well as that of *Senſe*: And then how abſurd an impatience is it, for men to think every the ſlighteſt injury from another inſupportable, and yet heap ſuch heavy preſſures upon themſelves: Like froward *Children* roar out for the leaſt touch from *another* hand, yet knock and batter *themſelves* without complaint: As if their only contention were, that they may be the ſole *Authors* of their own *calamity*. And that which adds yet more, if it be poſſible to add to ſo vaſt a folly, is, that *revenge* never repairs any *Injury*: If I have been reproacht or defam'd, 'Tis not the wounding of my enemies body that will heal my fame; I may by that means help to ſpread the Libel by

inviting

inviting many to enquire the cause of our quarrel: But that is no *Medium* to prove him a slanderer, the world being too well acquainted with the nature of revenge to imagine it an argument of his innocency that acts it: So far it is from being such, that it gives a most violent presumption of guilt, according to that notable *observation* of the *Historian, Convitia spreta exolescunt, si irascare agnita videntur.* In like manner suppose me hurt in my body, *retaliation* brings no *balm* to my sores: My pains abate not by his having the like or greater; nor would my Wounds *fester the less* though his should *gangrene.* So if I am indammag'd in my goods, I may contrive to repay him that ill turn, and yet not recover my own loss; and generally the spightful spoils that are made, are of that nature. 'Tis true, the Law may in some cases repair the injur'd person; but then that is owing to the Justice of the *Law*, not to the malice of the *Plaintiff:* For he that sues upon the naked intuition of recovering his *right*, without any aspect of *revenge* on the invader, has as fully the benefit of the *Law* (and indeed none can innocently have it otherwise) and then to what serves the vindicative humour, what increment or advantage can the superaddition of his revenge bring him in? 'Tis sure in all these instances it often does the quite contrary; plunges him in farther troubles and dangers, and when all this is consider'd, we may certainly pronounce *Christs* precept of Meekness partakes as well of the *Serpent* as the *Dove*, is as well *prudent* as *innocent*: Nor is this *Conclusion* at all shaken by that *Objection* which men make from the danger of inviting more injuries and affronts by this tameness: For first, suppose there were truth in it; that hazard could not balance the many certain mischiefs which have been evinc'd inseparably to follow the contrary temper: And it were certainly less penal to endure multitudes of light and transient *Abuses*, than those far more uneasie ways of *redress*, which mens revenges suggest to them: And then 'twill be perfectly reasonable, *of* these *two evils to chuse the less.* As for the greater and more important violations, there are legal ways which may prove redress in some cases, or prevention in others: He that is slandered or impoverished, may take a course to clear his *Innocence*, or recover his *goods:* He that is hurt or maim'd, though he is uncapable of reparations, yet the law provides for his future security, by awarding such *penalties*, as may discourage the *offender* from repeating the *violence:* And to these aids, a man may resort with these *Proviso's*, *first*, that he abstract from all design of *revenge*; and *secondly*, that the matter be of *weight*; and certainly he that by these *legal means* cannot be secur'd, can be much less so by any *private attempt* of his own: For he that despiseth the coercive *power* of Laws, will much more contemn the *enmity* of a single person. The only difficulty in this case is, when a State is in such a confusion that there is no lawful Judicature to appeal to; but that implies so many sadder miseries, than the want of such a redress amounts to, that every man may patiently enough cast this into the heap of greater evils; and not consider that one pressure, when so much weightier calamity exacts his grief: But sure the *suspension of Law* in this particular does no more *qualifie* a private person to be his own *Revenger*, than it invests him in any other part of *Authority*; and he may with as good right place himself on the Bench, and become a *Judge* in *other* mens causes, as thus become both *Judge* and *Executioner* in his *own.*

An Objection against it Answered.

17. But in the *last* place, the ground of this objection seems weak and sandy; for that meekness is not the way to expose a man, generally speaking, to more suffering: 'Tis possible indeed through the barbarity of some few insulting *Cowards*, who love to vapour *good cheap*, that they may trample on

on thoſe who give leaſt reſiſtance; but this is not the common bent of *humane Nature*, (which ought to be the meaſure in this caſe) we find men uſually exaſperated by *oppoſition*, who are calm'd and appeas'd by *gentleneſs*. *Anger* is not of the nature of that monſtrous *Fire* the *Hiſtorian* tells us of, which *nothing but blows could extinguiſh*. It is the *obſervation* of the wiſeſt of Men, that a *ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath*, and mens *paſſions* are like *bullets* which batter the walls which ſtand inflexible, but fall harmleſly into Wool or Feathers; and I doubt not common experience will atteſt it, that none do generally fall under fewer of theſe ſtorms, than they, who are thus prepar'd to bear them. Let a meek and an angry perſon caſt up their Accounts together, and compare the number of affronts and contumelies they have met with, and I believe the *odds* will be as *great*, as between *Sauls* thouſands and *Davids* ten thouſands. 'Tis certain that the return made to the firſt injury provokes a new one; men being ſo partial to themſelves, that he who receives a harm by way of *retaliation*, never reflects on his own firſt guilt, but looks on it as a naked *injury*, and ſo purſues his Revenge, which has again the ſame effect on the other, and ſo this *wild-fire* runs round, till it have ſet all in a *flame*; made the ſaddeſt vaſtations, not only in mens *minds*, but their outward *concernments* too, in the many fatal outrages, which theſe eager contentions occaſion, all which would be avoided by a meek diſregard of the firſt provocation: So that although ſome injuries may fall upon the Paſſive man, yet infallibly there would be no broils and quarrels, which are alone the great accumulators and multipliers of injuries; which alone demonſtrates how unjuſtly *meekneſs* is charg'd with ſo much as an accidental production of them; and vindicates that *precept* of *Chriſt* which has fallen under ſo much, not only *cavil* but *ſcorn*; it appearing, that to abſtain from revenge, and refer the hazards of that to Gods providence (which is the importance of his command to *turn the cheek*) is the greateſt even moral *ſecurity* againſt *violence*, and ſo approves our *Law-giver* (in this ſo decried particular) to be as well the *wonderful Counſeller*, as the *Prince of Peace*.

18. In the next place, if we weigh the *precept* of humility and lowlineſs in the *balance* of ſober diſcourſe, we ſhall certainly find it hold a *juſt weight*. Indeed *pride* is nothing but *deceit*, a meer cheat and deluſion, and ſo every man can diſcern it in another, we *there* are able to trace the windings of this *Serpent*, and ſay *this* man thinks himſelf more wiſe, *this* more learned, a *third* more holy than he is: yet alas! in our own breaſts we diſcern not the *Abuſe*, ſuffer him to perſwade *us* what he but promis'd to our *firſt Parents*, that we are *as Gods*, ſomething ſo ſuper-excellent, that all muſt reverence and adore: And herein we take him at his word, never ſuſpect theſe glorious *Attributions* may be no more than *complement* or Flattery; or what is no leſs obvious, *deriſion* and *ſcorn*. To a conſidering man 'twould be a ſhrewd *preſumption* againſt whatever *pride* ſuggeſts, that 'tis attended always by *ſelf-love*, which is, as it were, the *common Setter* to all thoſe cheats which circumvent and fool us: But there want not alſo more convincing proofs of its deceit and unſincerity. When e're we overween and believe well of our ſelves, it is in contemplation of ſome *imaginary* or elſe *real* good; ſomewhat a Man has not, or ſomewhat that he has: If we do it upon the former account, that is undeniably a groſs *deluſion*; a kind of *deceptio viſus*, a filling the Eye with fantaſtick *Aerial* Images, which have no *ſolid* Being: And God knows, ſuch *Phaſmes*, ſuch Apparitions are moſt of thoſe *excellencies* which men applaud in themſelves; things conjur'd up by the *Magick* of a ſtrong imagination, and are only ſeen

Secondly, of Humility.

within that *Circle* in which the *Enchanter* stands: And though *Satan* be the *grand Master of this black Art*, yet his *Pupils* are now grown so dexterous, that he seldom needs to be call'd in; our own partialities and fondnesses to our selves, are abundantly sufficient for the purpose. But if in the *second* place we suppose the things to be *really* existent in us, yet *pride* runs us upon an *other error* no less dangerous than the *former*, for it betrays us to mistake the true *owner* of them, emboldens us to set our own mark upon those *rich Wares*, in whose acquest we have not been so much as *Factors*; God is the one great Author and Proprietor of all that is or can be valuable in us; to his Providence or his Grace we owe all the accomplishment of our outward or inward man, and though he allows us the *use* and benefit of them, yet the *glory* is a special *royalty* which (as the Gold or Silver Mines of a Nation) is reserved to his *Crown*, an incommunicable piece of his *Regality*. And how wofully does our *pride* befool us, when it brings us in such false *Inventories* of our goods, makes us dream our selves rich by anothers wealth; like *children* that *call every thing theirs which looks splendidly*, or the mad *Athenian* celebrated by *Horace* for his happy frenzy, that *resolv'd all the Ships and Wares his own that came into the Cities harbour*: But how more sadly does it betray us, when it thus puts us upon the invasion of *his* propriety, who is not, as the impotent *Monarchs* of the Earth, unable to assert his own *rights*, but can certainly *vindicate* himself to our *confusion*; against whom no rebellion can be any longer prosperous than he willingly permits it, and who has solemnly avowed *he will not give his glory to another*: And when our *pride* makes us thus both ridiculous and miserable, when it seduces us not only into the folly of *children* and extravagancies of *Lunaticks*, but at once into the guilt of bold, and punishment of improsperous *rebels*: Certainly reason can never become its *Advocate*, or put in any *demur* to that *sentence* which excludes so treacherous a *guest* out of mens hearts; which is the sole aim of those *laws of humility* which *Christ* has given us.

Thirdly, of Temperance and Chastity.

19. Nor will the Precepts of *temperance* and *purity* find any *worse doom* at this *Bar*, the contrary *vices* being such indignities and contumelies unto humane nature, as can never find any *countenance* from this Supreme part of it: 'Tis the prerogative of our Reason, that it discriminates us *from*, and elevates us *above* beasts: Nor can it ever be brought to resign this so glorious a priviledge, assent to the admission of those brutish appetites which would over-run the *Soul*, level its *superior* with its *inferior* faculties; confound the distinction of *rational* and *sensitive*, and in a word, render the *Beast* so ravenous as to eat up the *Man*. Yet *thus* it is in those sordid Sins of *intemperance* and *uncleanness*, unless perhaps they are so much worse than *bestial* that I wrong the generality of the Brutes in the comparison, it being only some few of them, the very *beasts* of the Beasts that are guilty of any such *excesses*; for generally their *appetites* do not transgress the *regular ends* of *nature*, they know no such disease as *surfeiting*, but eat to satisfie *hunger*, and couple at such seasons as best tend to preserve their kind; and then 'tis to be consider'd, how base, how *degenerous* a descent it is for us to stoop, not only below our *own* nature, but *theirs*; what a *solitude* these vices reduce us to, that not so much as the nobler sort of *beasts* will bear us *company*; we must wander upon the *mountains* to court a *Goat*, we must rake the *mire* to find a *Swine*, before we can furnish our selves with any *associates*: And sure all this is so open an *hostility* against Reason, that it can by no means be her *interest* to abet it. Ask her whether she would be *prest to death* with *loads of meat*, whether she would be *drown'd* in *floods* of

of drink, whether ſhe would be *ſuffocated* with the *noiſom vapours of putrefaction* and rottenneſs, and the *anſwer* ſhe gives to theſe tells you her ſence of *Gluttony*, *Drunkenneſs* and *Uncleanneſs*: Alas! ſhe ſuffers from them the moſt barbarous outrages, is invaded not only in her *authority*, but her very *Being*, and therefore even upon the ſo celebrated principle of ſelf-preſervation, muſt muſter all her forces to vindicate the injury and defend her ſelf. And then certainly *Chriſts commands* of *ſobriety* and *purity* muſt needs be entertain'd with all *alacrity* and *gladneſs*, as an acceſſion of *ſtrength* to her party, an *aid* to aſſiſt her in that juſt and neceſſary *War*.

Fourthly, of Liberality.

20. And as *reaſon* thus pronounces againſt the ſins of the *fleſh*, ſo in the next place does it certainly againſt thoſe of the *world*. *Mammon* himſelf will not be able to bribe this *Judge*, but when *Chriſts precept* of Charity and liberality comes before this *tribunal*, it will infallibly be not only *acquitted* but *magniſied* and applauded, be call'd from the *Bar* to the *Bench*, Commiſſioned like the *Jews*, *Heſt. 9. To bear rule over them that hated them*; to diſſipate at once the wealth and the covetouſneſs of the *worldling*; have the *keys* put into its hand; that it may have free acceſs to his *Coffers*; this certainly muſt be the event of this trial, for 'tis confeſſedly the part of *reaſon* to *diſpoſe* every thing to thoſe *uſes* which are moſt *proper* and *advantageous*, ſuch as may bring in moſt *real benefit* to the owner. Now what other employment of *wealth* is there (after competent accommodations are provided) which can contribute to a mans *felicity*? If it be laid out like the *rich mans* in the Goſpel *in delicious fare*, or *Purple* and *fine Linnen*; certainly it makes no leaſt approach towards it. Firſt, for exceſſive Fare, if a man be *not exceſſive* too in the eating, what does he *enjoy* of it? *Meat* has no natural propriety to the *eye*, and can make no impreſſions of pleaſure there; but if he be *voracious* and intemperate, 'tis then ſo far from making him *happy*, that it dejects him into the *forlorn condition*, even now mentioned, ſets him at odds with his *reaſon*, his very *manhood*, nay, I may add with his very *ſenſe* too; the diſplacencies that he receives by the conſequences of his exceſs, far out-weighing all that is grateful in it. This is well deſcrib'd by the *Wiſe man*, *Ecclus.* 31. 19.

Vanity of Pride in Apparel.

21. As for the *gayety of Apparel*, that can never in ſober judging be thought any *advantage*; 'tis that which only *youth* and *folly* puts a value upon, and as we out-grow the one, ſo do we the other: All that is convenient in Cloaths is as well, nay, better provided for without it: A *rich ſuit* is only *heavier*, not *warmer* than a plain; and it is a kind of prodigy to ſee *how heavily vanity*, which is in it ſelf ſo *light*, ſits upon ſome men; who are content even to make themſelves *Porters*, ſo their *Tailors* may lay on the *burthen*: And thus in many other inſtances the fineneſs of Cloaths deſtroys the eaſe, ſo that it often *helps* men to pain, but can never *rid* them of any; the body may be languiſhing and infirm under the moſt ſplendid cover: *Herods royal apparel* ſecures him not from being *eaten with worms*; and *Lazarus his Ulcers* would have been never the leſs *painful*, though they had been *wrapt in* Dives *his fine Linnen*?

Of too great a retinue or number of Servants.

22. Or if the *wealth* be laid out on any other part of *that* the world calls *greatneſs*, as an *honourable retinue*, *Troops of attendants*, and the like; the return will be no leſs *empty*: Multitudes of unprofitable *ſervants* being a great *burthen*, but no degree of *advantage*. Alas! does my *meat* reliſh ever the better, becauſe my *table* is ſurrounded with *waiters*? Or when I go out, does my *train of followers* make the *Air* the *more refreſhing* to me; does not rather the *duſt* they raiſe make it *leſs*, annoy and ſtifle me? As for *matter of buſineſs*, the number of *ſervants* tends rather to *hinder* than *advance* it;

daily experience attesting, that in crouds of domesticks every one of them thinks his idleness will be hid: The care of *doing* and the guilt of *omitting* is transferr'd from one to another, and none has any farther *thought*, than how he may *quit* himself either of the *burthen* or the *blame*; so that upon the final account all that accrues to a *Master* by the *greatness of his family*, is the *encrease of his care* in the regiment of it: A great deal of vigilance and circumspection being requir'd to keep it in any tolerable *order*, and if it be not so kept, his House becomes a *wilderness*, and himself a *prey* to the Beasts he feeds: The licentiousness of the Servant redounding more ways than one to the damage of the *Master*.

Of Prodigality and Covetousness.

23. If we should now proceed more *minutely* to every other *single expence* which *vanity* and *pride* suggests, we should certainly find the like success of our inquest; nothing of *real felicity*, but on the contrary the *vanity* so interwoven and incorporate with *vexation of Spirit*, that 'tis impossible to sever them: So that *thus* to employ ones riches is rather to *suffer* than *enjoy* them. But if we suppose a man on the other side such a *Reverer of his Wealth*, that he dares not *employ* it at all, unless it be at the *bank*, for the bringing in of more, that keeps it as men do beasts reserv'd for breed, manumit them from all work but that of propagation. Such a person is surely of all others the fartheſt from receiving any advantage by it: He converts it from a *servant* into a *tyrant*, and sad experience shews us the calamity of such a transmutation. It has been always held the *severest treatment* of *slaves* and *Malefactors damnari ad Metalla*, force them to dig in Mines; now this is the *covetous mans lot*, from which he is never to expect a *release*, as being his own remorseless and more than *Egyptian task-master*: And the parallel holds too, in the gainlesness as well as laboriousness of the work; Those wretched *creatures* buried in *earth* and darkness were never the *richer* for all the *Ore* they digg'd, no more is the *insatiate Miser*, he has no power to *dispose* of any of his *acquests*; and though he calls them *his*, yet alas he *possesses* them no otherwise than a *prisoner* does his *Gaol*, a *Mad-man* his *chains*, they are only *instruments* of his *thraldom*, and the getting more serves only to add more weight to his Shackles; and certainly *wealth* can be no way worse dispos'd, than thus to buy so base a *servitude*.

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find the *omnipotent efficacy* they dream of, ſooner in this way of *diſſipating*, than in all their *arts*, or rather Fancies of generating Gold. 'Tis certainly a moſt generous and enlivening pleaſure which reſults from a *ſeaſonable liberality*: When I ſee a man ſtrugling with *want*, his very ſpirit as well as body ſtooping under the preſſure; if I then relieve him, the *humane nature* within me which is common to us both, does by a kind of *Sympathetick motion* exult and raiſe up it ſelf; but if I have any *piety*, that muſt do it much more; for as the *former* ſhew'd me *my own image* in my poor *brother*, ſo *this* ſhews me *Gods*: And how tranſcendent a ſatisfaction muſt it be, to have thus reſcued him who bears ſo divine an impreſs, to have paid ſome part of *gratitude* to my Creator for my own *being*, by making my ſelf, in my low ſphere, the giver or preſerver of that life, which he firſt breathed into another? *This*, and this only is the *way* to raiſe a *felicity* out of *wealth*; and ſurely ſince the attaining of *happineſs* is the one grand *purſuit* of our *reaſon*, that muſt even before it has ſubjected it ſelf to the *faith of Chriſt*, give aſſent to the *prudence of his Command* in *this* as well as the *former* inſtances.

Reaſonableneſs of ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake.

25. But there remains a *precept* of our *Saviours* allied to this; which ſeems by no means to *comport* and *hold a correſpondence* with the dictates of *right reaſon*; the *taking up the Croſs*, and *ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake*; which contradicts the fundamental law of ſelf-preſervation, and the great end of being, felicity and happineſs. But this *ſuggeſtion*, how ſpecious ſoever it appear, is utterly *fallacious*; for 'tis no good conſequence, that becauſe *reaſon* aims at our being *happy*, therefore it forbids us all *voluntary ſufferings*, ſince that the caſe may be ſo ſet, that *ſuch a ſuffering* may be the *faireſt medium* left us to our *happineſs*. 'Tis a known rule, that *of two evils the leaſt is to be choſen*; and the election of the leſſer ill, though it be no *abſolute*, yet is a *comparative* good; and its *attainment* as far as the neceſſity of our affairs permits, is our *felicity*: And reaſon can provide no farther. Now this is the eſtate of the preſent inſtance: *Two evils* are propos'd, a *natural* and a *moral*; the Natural, though in its ſelf to be averted, yet much inferior to the Moral, and then *reaſon* ſoon reſolves the *Dilemma*, that the *natural is to be choſen*: All that can be queſtion'd in this affair, is *whether reaſon define the moral evil to be the greater*, but this can bear no long diſpute with any who conſider but the *nature of reaſon*, which being ſeated in the *upper ſoul* of a man, is no way concern'd in thoſe *Ills*, which make their impreſſion on the *ſenſitive part*: But *moral* ills ſtrike higher, invade the *mind*, cloud the *reaſon*; nay, often depoſe it from its regiment, as is too frequently exemplified in the force of vicious habits; and therefore by how much our *reaſon* is ſuperior to our *ſenſe*, ſo much are thoſe to be accounted the *greateſt evils*, which aſſault that *nobler part* of us. This certainly will now be the *determination* of Reaſon, if ſhe may be permitted the freedom of her vote: For thus was it formerly, where ſhe bare the moſt ſway, and uncontrouled rule; the wiſeſt and beſt conſidering of *humane*, as well as *divine Authors* having eſtabliſht it as an undoubted *Aphoriſm*, that *honeſty is to be preferr'd before both gainful and pleaſant*: So that nothing renders a man ſo *deplorable*, as that which violates his *integrity*; nay they have generally gone higher, exhorted men to *become voluntiers in vertues warfare, not to ſuſpend their ſufferings, till they were forc'd out by the competition of a crime*; *but offer themſelves free oblations.* Thus to ſuffer for ones *country* or ones *friend*, was thought ſo *worthy*, ſo *heroick* a thing, that *noble* and *ingenuous ſpirits* were *emulous* of it: And it was ſo ſtated a caſe that *Epictetus* forbids a man, on ſuch an occaſion to conſult with the *Oracle*, whether he ſhould do it or no, it being *neceſſary* to be done, whatever ill ſucceſs or ruine be predicted, ὅτε ὁ Σάραπις ἀπαιτήσει, ἢ πάροδος

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Charity best imploys our Wealth.

24. And now since neither the *luxurious* spending, nor the *covetous* keeping can *advantage* us one step towards any thing that can be call'd *happy*; but do on the contrary *engage* us upon toil and *misery*: *Wealth* seems to be a very oppressive *burthen*, such as we can neither *cast off*, nor safely *bear*; and truly so it is till *charity* comes in to our Aid; which as the proper *element of wealth*, renders that *light* which gravitates elsewhere, and as the *Elixir* unto *Metals* transforms them into *Gold*, stamps *purity* and *price* upon them: By freely giving, endows the *donor* with whatever he bestows; enriches *him*, and what is more, enriches *wealth* it self. Without this *art of using*, and disposing our estates, we are those *Indians* who change their Gold for Glass: That silly *Fisherman*, who having found a *mass of Ambergreece*, employed it to the *liquoring of his Boots*; are foolish to the height of *Midas* in the Fable; who being promis'd to have what ever he would *wish*, made his *demand* that every thing he toucht might presently be Gold, and run the hazard that he did of being *starv'd* by our unhappy affluence: Men say indeed that *Gold by preparation* becomes a *soveraign cordial*, but certainly it never does rejoyce the heart so much as when Charity is the *Chymist*; the *poor mans hand* is the best *Limbeck* to extract this *Magistery* and *tincture*, the *flames of love* will really perform those *miracles*, they of the Furnace boast of; and would they employ themselves in this *laboratory*, they would find

find the *omnipotent efficacy* they dream of, ſooner in this way of *diſſipating*, than in all their *arts*, or rather Fancies of generating Gold. 'Tis certainly a moſt generous and enlivening pleaſure which reſults from a *ſeaſonable liberality*: When I ſee a man ſtrugling with *want*, his very ſpirit as well as body ſtooping under the preſſure; if I then relieve him, the *humane nature* within me which is common to us both, does by a kind of *Sympathetick motion* exult and raiſe up it ſelf; but if I have any *piety*, that muſt do it much more; for as the *former* ſhew'd me *my own image* in my poor *brother*, ſo *this* ſhews me *Gods*: And how tranſcendent a ſatisfaction muſt it be, to have thus reſcued him who bears ſo divine an impreſs, to have paid ſome part of *gratitude* to my Creator for my own *being*, by making my ſelf, in my low ſphere, the giver or preſerver of that life, which he firſt breathed into another? *This*, and this only is the *way* to raiſe a *felicity* out of *wealth*; and ſurely ſince the attaining of *happineſs* is the one grand *purſuit* of our *reaſon*, that muſt even before it has ſubjected it ſelf to the *faith of Chriſt*, give aſſent to the *prudence of his Command* in *this* as well as the *former* inſtances.

Reaſonableneſs of ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake.

25. But there remains a *precept* of our *Saviours* allied to this; which ſeems by no means to *comport* and *hold a correſpondence* with the dictates of *right reaſon*; the *taking up the Croſs*, and *ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake*; which contradicts the fundamental law of ſelf-preſervation, and the great end of being, felicity and happineſs. But this *ſuggeſtion*, how ſpecious ſoever it appear, is utterly *fallacious*; for 'tis no good conſequence, that becauſe *reaſon* aims at our being *happy*, therefore it forbids us all *voluntary ſufferings*, ſince that the caſe may be ſo ſet, that *ſuch a ſuffering* may be the *faireſt medium* left us to our *happineſs*. 'Tis a known rule, that *of two evils the leaſt is to be choſen*; and the election of the leſſer ill, though it be no *abſolute*, yet is a *comparative* good; and its *attainment* as far as the neceſſity of our affairs permits is our *felicity*: And reaſon can provide no farther. Now this is the eſtate of the preſent inſtance: *Two evils* are propos'd, a *natural* and a *moral*; the Natural, though in its ſelf to be averted, yet much inferior to the Moral, and then *reaſon* ſoon reſolves the *Dilemma*, that the *natural is to be choſen*: All that can be queſtion'd in this affair, is *whether reaſon define the moral evil to be the greater*, but this can bear no long diſpute with any who conſider but the *nature of reaſon*, which being ſeated in the *upper ſoul* of a man, is no way concern'd in thoſe *Ills*, which make their impreſſion on the *ſenſitive part*: But *moral* ills ſtrike higher, invade the *mind*, cloud the *reaſon*; nay, often depoſe it from its regiment, as is too frequently exemplified in the force of vicious habits; and therefore by how much our *reaſon* is ſuperior to our *ſenſe*, ſo much are thoſe to be accounted the *greateſt evils*, which aſſault that *nobler part* of us. This certainly will now be the *determination* of Reaſon, if ſhe may be permitted the freedom of her vote: For thus was it formerly, where ſhe bare the moſt ſway, and uncontrouled rule; the wiſeſt and beſt conſidering of *humane*, as well as *divine Authors* having eſtabliſht it as an undoubted *Aphoriſm*, that *honeſty is to be preferr'd before both gainful and pleaſant*: So that nothing renders a man ſo *deplorable*, as that which violates his *integrity*; nay they have generally gone higher, exhorted men to *become voluntiers in vertues warfare, not to ſuſpend their ſufferings, till they were forc'd out by the competition of a crime*; *but offer themſelves free oblations*. Thus to ſuffer for ones *country* or ones *friend*, was thought ſo *worthy*, ſo *heroick* a thing, that *noble* and *ingenuous ſpirits* were *emulous* of it: And it was ſo ſtated a caſe that *Epictetus* forbids a man, on ſuch an occaſion to conſult with the *Oracle*, whether he ſhould do it or no, it being *neceſſary* to be done, whatever ill ſucceſs or ruine be predicted, ὅτε ὁ Σάραπις συμβουλεύει, ἢ

πτῶσις

πήρωσις μέρους σώματος, ἢ φυγὴ, and how serious they were in these *perswasions*, some of them have *practically* evidenced, as having *suffered* very considerable pressures, nay *death* it self, rather than they would bow to the *predominant vices* of their Age, or omit the occasion of *eminent vertue*. *Aristides* would be just in spight of the *Ostracism*. *Regulus* observant of his *oath* made to a *faithless enemy*, though *death* and *torment* attended the *performance*. *Licurgus* to perpetuate to his Citizens the benefit of his *good Laws*, as subtilly designs *perpetual banishment* unto himself, as others use to contrive for *honour* and for *empire* there. *Codrus* redeems the safety of his *army* with his own *death*: *Curtius* makes himself a *Martyr* for his *country*, and *Socrates* in the stricter sence becomes one for his *God*: Laid down his *life* in attestation of that most *fundamental truth* and leading *article of Faith*, πιστεύειν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν, the *belief* of *one God*. And yet we find not that *those times*, which were so *ill* as to shed his *bloud*, were so *bad* as to defame his *memory*; he's not recorded either as *fool* or *hypochondriack*; nor have his *sufferings* struck him out of the list of *Philosophers*: But he stands there the more conspicuously in those *bloudy characters*; and however the credit of the *Oracle* may be otherwise disparaged, it never was on this account, that it had declared *Socrates* to be the *wisest of Men*. And yet both he and the rest, had either *none*, or very *imperfect* confus'd apprehensions of a future *reward*, when they engaged on present Suffering, and death it self: So that we might be tempted to imagine, that some strange change and *transmutation* has now befaln *virtue*, that it has put on so much a *distant* appearance from its *ancient* self, that the accession of new obligations, and higher hopes, should absolve, avert and utterly dispirit us; insomuch that what was Constancy in a *Heathen*, should be Folly in a *Christian*. Certainly this is a *Metamorphosis* of our own making, we look through deforming *optick-glasses*, such as our *avarice* or effeminate *sensualities* convey into our hands, which give not only *strange* and ghastly, but withal *ridiculous shapes*; but if we would consult our *reason*, that would shew us things in their *proper forms*. Virtue and Reason are both the same they were so many hundred years ago, and where the *object* and the *faculty* admit of no *mutation*, 'tis impossible there should really be any such *variable appearance*. If *Socrates* were so zealous for the *one God*, that he chose rather to relinquish his *life*, than to consent to, or but connive at the *profane rivalry of Polytheism*, and yet be no Fool; certainly we may as securely transcribe his copy: And though the particular Article may not be the same; yet if it be any thing wherein virtue is concern'd, the cause is no less warrantable: He that suffers for a *practical* Point, is no more a prodigal of his pains, than he that lays them out on the highest *speculative*. The *Commandments* may have as good *Martyrs* as the *Creed*; for the same *authority* has requir'd our *obedience* to the *one*, that exacts our *faith* of the *other*. Nor is there any necessity of *Heathen* or *Jewish* Tribunal, to convert our sufferings to *Martyrdom*; we may receive that crown from the hands of those that own the same faith with us. Those that say with the most seeming vehemence, *Let the Lord be glorified*, may yet hate and cast out their brethren for his names sake, *Isa. 66. 5.* He that tells me I fear not *God so much* as he, may yet persecute me for honouring the *King more*; and my *bloud* pour'd out upon that account, becomes an *acceptable sacrifice* to him, who has commanded my Subjection to the *higher Powers*. He who calls Christ his *head*, may yet rend and tear his Body; and if I love its communion so well, as to take my share in the *Massacre*, I approach toward that dignity and comfort S. *Paul* so glories in, of *filling up that which is behind, of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his*

his bodies ſake which is the Church, Col. 1. 24. He that mulcts the more *indeliberate* Oaths, may yet enjoyn a ſolemn Perjury: And if I chuſe he ſhould rather make havock of my *goods* than my Conſcience; my *ſpoils* become not more monuments of his *rapine* than my *piety*; they plead my *innocence* before him who *will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain*: And how profanely ſoever my *wealth* is diſpos'd by him that ſeiſes it, 'tis accounted to me as caſt into the *treaſury*; and ſo 'tis poſſible I may at once vie with the *rich men* in the greatneſs of the oblation, and with the *poor widow* too in that higher circumſtance of its being all. In ſumm, the opportunities of *Martyrdom* are not reſtrained to thoſe points wherein *Chriſtians* differ from *Jews* or *Heathens*, but extend to all wherein we Chriſtians differ from our rule, the commands of our bleſſed Maſter. If I ſuffer for my *conſtancy* to any of them, I have certainly my place in *Gods Martyrologie*, as well as if I had faln under any of the *ten Perſecutions*. God was not ſo partial to the *primitive Chriſtians* as to allow them the *Monopoly* and encloſure of that dignity; if *they* as our *elder brethren* had a *double portion*, yet there is ſtill a *childs part* left for every one of us, enough to teſtifie our *legitimation*, and ſecure us from the brand of *baſtardy*, *Heb.* 12. 'Twas S. *Paul's* indefinite affirmation, and all times ſince have born witneſs to the truth of it; That *all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution*. Some *unfaſhionable vertues* there have been in every Age, which have whetted, if not the *Swords*, yet the *Tongues* of men: And thoſe that happen not to fall under *Abels* perſecution, muſt not hope to eſcape that of *Iſaac*: If they meet with no *Cain* to *kill*, they will undoubtedly with an *Iſhmael* to *mock* them. But in what dreſs ſoever our *ſufferings* appear, a *good cauſe* diveſts them of their *frightful ſhape*, pulls off the *ugly vizard*, and ſhews us a *beauty* that lay there conceal'd; and that not only to the Eye of our *faith* but our *reaſon* too. *Fortitude* was a *vertue* before *Chriſtianity* had a name in the world; and the very inſtinct of our *nature whiſpers* within us, the *baſeneſs* of being baffled out of a Truth or Vertue; yet ſuch a deſpicable *coward* is every man that wants this *paſſive valour*, without which the *active* muſt find another name; Rage or Frenzy it may be, in ſome perhaps natural *courage*, or ſanguineſs of temper in others, but true Valour it is not, if it knows not as well to *ſuffer* as to *do*. That *mind* is truly great, and only that which ſtands above the *power* of all *extrinſick violence*; which keeps it ſelf a diſtinct *principality* independent upon the outward man, ſo that it is not ſubjected to its fate; that can be *free*, when the body is faſt *bound* in Miſery and Iron, *ſound* and *healthy*, when that *groans* under torture, and is never more *ſtrong* and *vital*, than when that *languiſhes* and *expires*; and this is ſo deſirable, ſo tranſcendent a *priviledge*, as *reaſon* cannot but *aſpire* to: And this is it to which this excellent *precept* of Chriſt advances us when we thus *ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake*, our Minds are all *light*, what *darkneſs* ſoever involve our exterior part, and is like *Goſhen*, exempt and ſecure, when that falls under all the Plagues of *Ægypt*.

Rewards and threatnings great motives to obedience.

26. And what reaſon thus embraces for it ſelf, 'tis not imaginable that it ſhould reject, becauſe 'tis richly clad; that the Race ſhould ſeem the more tedious, becauſe there is a Crown within view; or that the glorious *rewards* our Chriſtianity propoſes to our conſtancy, ſhould be eſteemed as *menaces* and *threats*, Temptations to defert or turn Apoſtates. No certainly, Reaſon cannot diſpute, and make an *inference* ſo utterly *illogical*, but will rather uſe it as an *enforcement* of its former *concluſion*, eſtabliſh it the more firm and immoveable by having the *baſis* thus enlarged, having *reward* added to *virtue*, and *happineſs* entail'd on *duty*. If in the competi-

tion

tion between two Evils, *reason* pronounce the *lesser eligible*: Much more will she resolve, when the contest is 'twixt *good and evil*, the greatest Evil and the greatest Good; and chuse that *excellence* which though *superlative* in it self, is more endear'd and heightned by *comparison*. If I violate my *reason*, if I renounce *virtue*, though bare and naked, then surely I do it yet more when she is thus *accomplisht* and adorn'd; when *beautified* on purpose to allure the *eye*, and take the *heart*. When over and above the positive donation of Happiness, she adds a rescue and release from *misery*, and equally obliges by the distant prospects of a Hell and Heaven. So that not only the *Gospel-promises*, but even *menaces* and *threats* become a *weapon* in the hand of *reason*, when she stands upon her *guard*, and fights for *virtue*. If *sin* present it self as my *Protector* from a *temporal* Calamity, *reason* will tell me hence, that the proffer is insidious, it exposes me to that which is *infinitely worse* than what it pretends to save me from; and that not only in the former respect of Guilt, but in that of Punishment also. What a cheat is it to keep me out of the *dungeon*, and send me to the *bottomless pit*; to save me from a *temporary fire*, and thereby mark me out as Fuel for *eternal flames*; to take me out of *their hands* who can *kill the body*, to put me into *his* who can *destroy both soul and body in Hell? Reason* tells me I am to abhor the *turpitude* and *foulness* of a Crime; and it tells me too, I am to dread the *misery* and Smart of it also. It would not have me wallow in the *mire*, though it were *safe*, much less when it is full of *Asps* and *Vipers*, which will infallibly sting me to death. It cries out with *Joseph*, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* And it cries out with *Esay* too, *Who can dwell with everlasting fire?* In a word, by the domestick native *light* of the *candle of the Lord* let up within our *breast*, it shews the ugliness of *sin*; and shews it too by the affrightful dismal *blaze* of those *unquenchable flames* it kindles: Thus by the different *arguments* of terror and endearment, of love and fear, of interest and duty, *reason* asserts this scorn'd, decried, neglected *precept*: Take her as mere *Paynim* abstracting from the expectation of reward or punishment; or take her as a *Proselyte* to Christ, contemplating his promises and threats, if there be *honesty*, or if there be *religion*, in either instance the Soul must still conclude, that *Affliction is to be chosen rather than Iniquity*.

Reasonableness of self-denial.

27. And if it be reasonable thus to *resist even unto bloud striving against sin*, if *reason* blow the *trumpet*, sound the *alarm* to this solemn *War*, then surely it prescribes something of *Martial discipline* to prepare and dispose us for those *combats*. No expert *General* will bring a company of raw untrain'd men into the *field*, but will by little bloudless skirmishes instruct them in the manner of the *fight*, teach them the ready managery of their *weapons*; and of this sort are all those *voluntary self-denials*, and lighter austerities which Christianity commends to us, which become necessary not simply for themselves, but as instruments towards a higher end. The Military fame the *Romans* had in the world was atchieved by the exact discipline of their Camps, enuring their Souldiers to labour and hardship. And, as *Tacitus* tells us, when a *long peace* had slackned the reins of discipline, that *active humour*, which was wont to be spent on the Enemy, recoil'd, and flew in the face of their Commanders, begat nothing but *mutinies* and disorders; and certainly 'twill be the same in our *Christian warfare*, if we abandon our selves to Ease and Sloth, never attempt to wrestle with a difficulty, but keep our selves in the posture the *Israelites* Camp was in at *Moses*'s descent from the Mount, *eating and drinking, and rising up to play*; our appetites will grow licentious and insolent, past our controul and guidance.

dance. If we treat them with ſuch an indulgence as is recorded of *David* to *Adonijah*, never ſay ſo much as *why haſt thou done this?* 'Tis not to be expected but they will rebel, though a *Solomon* ſit in the *Throne*. For alas, how is it imaginable, that he who never denied himſelf any the *ſmalleſt* or *moſt trifling pleaſure* he had a mind to, ſhall on a ſudden deny *all in the groſs*? He who has projected *many* but never wav'd *one* Opportunity of ſhewing his *wit*, how ſhall he find in his heart to become a *fool for Chriſt*? He that has gratified his *palate* with all that pretends to be guſtful to it, how ſhall he deſcend to the *bread of affliction*? Or he that never tried to miſs a Meal, how will he entertain the unwelcome contrariety of not knowing where to get one? He who has never abated any thing of the utmoſt *pomp* he could reach, how will he brook the *want* of *neceſſaries*; or from his Houſe ceil'd with *Cedar*, and painted with *Vermillion*, be content with his *Saviours* Lot, *not to have where to lay his head*? In ſhort, how ſhall he who never could pare off any of the *excreſcencies*, the mere *vanities* and *gayeties* of an eſtate, part with it *all*; or lay down that *life for Chriſts ſake*, from which he never ſubſtracted one ſmalleſt *pleaſure*? *Suffering* is a thing to which the *ſenſitive* part of us has an Innate *averſion*, and Averſions are not to be ſubdued at once, but by gentle and eaſie *degrees*; and cuſtom muſt have introduc'd a ſecond nature, before that original part of our temper will be ſupplanted. As 'tis therefore highly reaſonable for every man to aſpire to the *dominion* of himſelf, to keep his *affections* within his own *power* and *command*; and though he have no *intereſt* at all in the *greater*, enjoy a ſoveraignty in the *leſſer* World: So in order to that, 'tis as reaſonable to diſcipline and tame them by ſome voluntary *acts* of *reſtraint*, like *Hannibal*, ſometimes to *paſs by that water to which his thirſts do moſt importunately invite him*. To try by little *skirmiſhes* what ſtrength and skill he has, before he runs the fatal hazard of a *battel*. To deny himſelf in the leſſer inſtances, that ſo when the greater come, they may not have the *diſadvantage* of Uncouthneſs and perfect Strangeneſs to enhanſe their *difficulty*. And this muſt certainly be acknowledg'd *reaſonable*, or elſe we muſt condemn almoſt all the receiv'd *rules* of *humane tranſactions*, which generally have this for their *ground-work*, that men muſt paſs through the *firſt principles* and *loweſt rudiments* of any Art, before they can arrive at its height. Men ſerve *Apprentiſhips* to Trades, and think not themſelves the firſt day *Maſters* of their craft; we advance in *learning* by leaſurable and ſlow ſteps, and skip not from the *A B C* to the *Metaphyſicks*: And certainly the skill of *Chriſtian ſuffering* is not the eaſieſt of all *Trades* or *Sciences*; but will require ſome time of *Initiation*, many repeated Trials and Eſſays to bring us into an acquaintance with it: To convince our *underſtandings*, and perſwade our *wills*, that *to loſe our lives is to ſave them*; and *to be faithful unto the death*, is the beſt way *to gain a crown of life*.

28. If I ſhould now proceed to every other *precept* of Chriſt, and examine it by the *rules* of *ſober diſcourſe*, we ſhould infallibly find them ſo rational as befits the Laws of *him* who is the *eternal reaſon*; but having made theſe *eſſays* in ſome of the moſt oppos'd Inſtances, I ſhall preſume theſe may paſs as the *repreſentatives* of *all* the reſt; and the acquittal theſe have received at the Tribunal of Reaſon virtually involve them all. *And all other inſtances of our Duty*

29. And now ſince both *conſcience* and *reaſon* have pronounc'd the ſame of Chriſts *Laws* that *Pilate* did of his *Perſon*, that *they find in them no fault at all*; methinks *Judges* ſhould have the ſame *priviledge* that is allowed to *private Men*; that *in the mouth of two every word may be eſtabliſh'd*: But if any man be ſo ſcrupulous as not to reſt in the ſentence of *leſs* than *Atteſted beſt by experience*

a *Triumvirate*, let him *in Gods name* bring in a *third*, and when his vicious *appetites* (which were before excepted to as parties) are set aside, he cannot be distracted in his *choice*, there being but *one* more that can possibly be call'd in, and that is *experience*, which being a *Judge* that himself must create, he cannot fear it should be prejudic'd against him; so that he may entertain full confidence of its *integrity:* And no less may he do of its *ability*, this being the most infallible of humane determinations, such as often corrects the *error* of *speculation*; and shews us the vanity of *concluding* what is *practicable in matter* from being *demonstrated in the Scheme* or *Diagram*; The *guidance* of an *illiterate traveller* in the way that he has gone, being far more useful to a *stranger* in his journey, than the best *Maps* and most exact *descriptions* of *Geographers*. But then it must be indeed *experience*, and not only some slight and transient Essay. We call not him an *experienc'd Physician* that has had *one Patient*, or a *Lawyer* that has pleaded *one Cause*. *Experience* is the *daughter* of *time*, and is made up of many *successive trials*, as a *habit* is of *multiplied acts:* And to the *verdict* of such an Experience Christs *precepts* will not fear to *stand*; let a man put himself into a setled course of *obedience* to them, abstain so long from all *prohibited commissions*, as may wear out the *rank taste* wherewith his *palate* has been season'd, and leave it free and disengag'd, and then infallibly he will find such a *savour* and *sweetness* in those *virtues*, that he will wonder how he came to be cheated into an *opinion* of their being *bitter* and *unsavoury*; and will have no *appetite* to *return to his Onions and his Garlick*, after he has thus been fed with *Quails* and *Manna*. That this will be the *event* of this *experiment* there is all *ground of certainty*, and when the *trial* is once made, so irrefragable an *evidence* will follow, that it will not leave a man the *power to doubt:* Only in the *interim* so much *belief* is requisite, as may let him into the *demonstration*, make him set to *that* Practice from whence he is to reap all *this:* And if any man be so much a *Sceptick*, as not to have *faith* enough to put him on the *adventure*, I should at once for his *conviction* and *punishment*, wish but that he might a-while extend the same *distrust* to Affairs of *common life:* Let him doubt whether his *meat* be savory, and *refuse to eat*; whether his *cloaths* be warm, and so *go naked*; whether his *house* be firm, and *lye without doors:* And when he has a while thus smarted under his own *discipline*, let him but apply the *wisdom* he has thus bought to the present *instance*, and it will unquestionably resolve his *scruple*; or if he be still too Impatient to attend the ripening of his own Experience, let him make use of other mens. Let him appeal to any who has inur'd his *neck* to Christs *yoke*, and ask him whether it be *galling* and *pinching*, or whether it be not *easie*, nay *gracious*. Let him ask one who by repeated restraints hath subdued and tamed his *natural rage* or *pride*, how he likes the *change*, and undoubtedly he will tell him, 'tis no less *happy* than a *calm* is after the noise and danger of a violent *tempest*, or the ease of a broken *impostbume* after the painful gathering and filling of it. Let him ask one who has divested himself of all his *sensual sins*, whether by their *absence* he now discern not their *necessity*, and he will tell them, 'tis but the same the *primitive Christians* had of those *beasts skins* wherein their *persecutors* had clad them, whose only use was by *deforming* to fit them for *devouring*. Let him come to the converted *Mammonist*, and ask him, which he finds the better *treasury*, his *own* Coffer or the poor mans Bowels, and he will be able to assure him he is become *much richer* by having *less in store*. Let him come to the devout *Ascetick*, and ask him what *taste* he finds in *Daniels* unpleasant *bread*, *Dan.* 10. 3. and he will tell him *infinitely more* than ever he did

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in *Dives's delicious fare*; that cloy'd and ſurfeited the fleſh, this nouriſhes and ſupports the ſpirit. Nay finally, let him come to him that is actually *ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake*, and he will exemplifie to him the *beatitude* which Chriſt has pronounc'd of ſuch: Let him viſit *Paul* and *Silas* in the *priſon*, and he ſhall hear them *ſinging*: *Peter* and the other *Apoſtles* after their *ſtripes* and beating, and he ſhall find them *rejoycing*; And *Stephen* amidſt the Throng of his *murderers* and Tempeſt of their *ſtones*, and he ſhall obſerve him overlooking them all, and entertaining himſelf with a more *pleaſant proſpect*, ſeeing the *Heavens open'd and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God*; and why ſhould not other mens ſucceſſes animate our endeavours here? In temporal affairs it ſeldom miſſes to do it. The Trophies of *Miltiades* at *Marathon* diſturb'd *Themiſtocles* his ſleeps, till he had rais'd unto himſelf and *Country* more glorious ones at *Salamine*; *Cæſar* while he views *Alexanders* Image upbraids his own ſlackneſs with the memory of his conqueſts, and inſpirits himſelf to great attempts. He that returns with a *rich fraight* from a *new-found-Land* encourages others to Trade *thither* alſo: Nay, even a *begger* ſpeeds not well at an *Hoſpitable door*, but he is able to ſend *ſholes* upon the like hopes: Much leſs does he that has found a *treaſure* need to uſe his *Oratory* to invite *partakers*; and why then ſhould thoſe *few* that have made this more precious *diſcovery* be forc'd to *monopolize* it, as not being able to *draw in partners?* Yet God knows, thus it is; thoſe that hear of no *rarity* but they long for it, as *David* after the waters of *Bethlehem*, can yet hear the ſame *David* cry out, *how ſweet the Lord is!* and yet have no curioſity to taſte it: Thoſe whom the very name of *Liberty* ſo captivates, that they ſacrifice all that is really valuable to that *Chimæra*; can hear the *Apoſtle* ſpeak of the *glorious liberty of the ſons of God*, and yet like hardned *Gally-ſlaves* deſpiſe the *Manumiſſion*. Thoſe that hunt after *pleaſures* till the very *purſuit* become an unſupportable *pain*, can be told of thoſe *rivers of pleaſures* wherewith God offers to quench their thirſt, and yet inflict on themſelves the *rich mans torment*, and deny ſo much as to *dip the tip of their finger* toward the *cooling* their own *flames*. Good God! what ſtrange *infatuation* is this, that while there is ſo much of *vicious envy* in the world, there ſhould be nothing of *virtuous emulation?* That mens heat and vigour ſhould all ſpend it ſelf in childiſh purſuits, and leave them thus cold and ſtupid to their great and *ſerious* concernments? And what remains to him that ponders this *Epidemick* folly, but to breath out *Moſes's* Wiſh; *O that men were wiſe*; or if that be too hopeleſs a vote, *O that men were not ſo deſtructively fooliſh*; that their raſhneſs and Error might be confin'd to their lower intereſts: And as *fools* are treated, *be kept from dealing in things of conſequence*; that they would not govern their Souls by ſuch an abſurd kind of managery, as they will not truſt with the meaneſt of their outward concerns. And if this might be obtain'd, if this *fatal Oſcitancy* which has benumb'd and frozen them were but *caſt off*, they would then from the report of the *good land* be animated to their *journey*; and rather chuſe to make the concurrent Teſtimonies of others arguments to encourage them, than *leave* them as Hand-writings to *appeal*, or Witneſſes to *condemn* them. And he that ſhall thus borrow other mens *experience* with this *deſign* of *copying it out*, and lays it as a foundation for his own, thereby poſſeſſes himſelf of one of the greateſt *advantages* of the *communion of Saints*; kindles himſelf at their *fire* till he grows bright and hot at it; combines his *flame* with theirs, and ſo encreaſes the Ardors of them both; follows Example till himſelf grows exemplary, and in one Act *receives* and *gives*. But he that thus ſets out, muſt remember, that it is more than the journey

of one day he has to go; he must not think (as I said before) that every little *superficial attempt* is that Experience which he is in quest of: He that thus fancies will be expos'd to a very dangerous deceit, for 'tis sure there is in all *habits* such a *force*, that they are not to be dispossest but by a contrary violence, and therefore he that has been under the power of any vicious *custom*, enters at first into a state of *hostility*, has such a tough *opposition*, as rather finds him Work than Pleasure: Now if he shall upon this first Essay pronounce, he is like to pass a very *unjust sentence*: Let him fight on a while till he have got some ground, and then though the War afforded him *little* pleasure, the Victory will yield him *much*. Every repeated defeat he gives his Adversary will be a new triumph to him, and what the *Romans* courted as so great a Dignity, he may every day *enjoy*. But then as he advances farther to the completing of his *victories*, so he does of his Pleasures too: When his irregular *appetites* are so subdued, that they rarely make *insurrection*, this is such a state of *tranquillity* as gives him leisure to discern, and enjoy the delights of Christian virtue, and will teach him to reproach the highest *Panegyrick* he ever heard of it as flat and imperfect: So infinitely will he find it exceed the utmost *description*, that he will say with the Queen of *Sheba*, *the one half was not told him*. This is the rich prize which they shall obtain that *run* the race, but it is not awarded to the *first step*; and hence it is so many fail of it, that when they find the uneasiness which attends the breaking off a *custom*; this is such a *Gyant*, a son of *Anak*, as turns them back discourag'd from the *Canaan* they went to view. But alas this discovers how small a stock of Resolution they carried out with them; for where men set out with *heart* and *appetite*, 'tis not such little *difficulties* that will dismay them: If it be but their *sports* they are engag'd in, it serves to deceive the sense of many uneasinesses, nay often dangers, he that is but in chase of a silly *Hare* is so keen upon it, that he feels not the weariness of a whole days motion, and if he meet with a *hedge* in his way will rather leap it with *hazard*, than be diverted from his Game. But 'tis sure in their sins they suffer far greater hardships without discouragement. The puny *drunkard* is not disheartned by the *first qualm*, but repeats his *excesses* till he have overcome his *queasiness*. The cast *Litigant* sits not down with one *cross verdict*, but recommences his *suit*, passes it through all *Courts*, and considers not his own *pains*, so he may either weary or force the other out of his *right*. The *unclean person* falls not out with his sin, how sadly soever it hath macerated him, but steps out of the *hot-house* into the *Stews*. And shall men be so indefatigable in their pursuits of *infelicity*, buy one *torment* with another, and drive on the year in a circle of such woful Traffick, and shall *virtue* and *pleasure* be thought not worth the smallest *labour*? Can they keep themselves in a *perpetual contention* with their *ease*, their *reason*, and their *God*; and can they not endure a short *combate* with a sinful *custom*? which if it have some *uneasiness*, yet 'tis both infinitely short of what they have suffered in the contrary compliance, and besides carries its *remedy* in its hand: For if the Difficulty arise only (as doubtless it does) from the confirm'dness of the Habit, every Act of resistance, as it weakens the Habit, so it abates the Difficulty. It is therefore a most *unreasonable inference*, from the *trouble* of the first opposition, to conclude the *impossibility* of the future; for if the *first* were but troublesome and not impossible, the *second* will have yet less of the trouble, and so be yet farther remov'd from impossibility, and the *third* than the *second*, and so on till the difficulty vanish and disappear: And if men would but assume such a *moderate courage*, as but to *keep the field*, and not to run away upon the first gun-

shot,

ſhot, they would ſoon find how impotent *aſſailants* they had to deal with, who can never ſubdue any man by *ſtrength*, who is not firſt emaſculated by his own *fears*. Let us therefore to ſhun the report of ſo diſhonourable a Defeat, awake and rouze our ſelves, put us in a *poſture* of *defence*: And *Satan*, who is as cowardly as any thing in the world but we, *will*, as S. *James* aſſures us, *flee from us*. Let us upbraid our ſelves with our unſeaſonable hardineſs and reſolution in our impieties till we have chang'd the *ſcene*, grow impatient of thoſe *ſervile drudgeries*, and ambitious of theſe *honourable adventures*. And to animate us the more, let us fix our *eyes* upon the glorious *prize* of the *victory*; and that not only the *final* and *eternal* in future Glory; but that *intermediate* which offers it ſelf as the *earneſt* of *That*, the calm and pleaſure of a conquering piety. The *Roman* ſtory tells us, that the *Flavianiſts* had ſo poſſeſt their minds with the *ſpoils* of *Vienna*, that they grew inſenſible of all *dangers* in the way to it, and even forc'd their General *Antonio* to put them upon thoſe hazards which his wiſer conduct would have declin'd. And why ſhould not our more worthy *hopes* excite as great an earneſtneſs? Why ſhould not we have as great an *appetite* to the pillaging of *Satans camp*, plundering that infernal *Magazine* of all its *engins* both of *mine* and *battery*, its ſtores of *arms* and *ammunition*, leaving him naked and defenceleſs, unable to make any impreſſion upon us? And this he certainly does, who by a ſteddy *practice of virtue*, comes to diſcern the *contemptibleneſs* of thoſe baits wherewith he allures us. He that ſeeks only the *Praiſe of God*, looks upon the *applauſe* of *men* as a blaſt of Air, which poſſibly may demoliſh and deſtroy a *glorious building*, but cannot give *foundation* or *materials* to it; and therefore will not ſeek for, or ſolicite its unhappy courtſhips. He who deſires to be *great* only *in the Kingdom of Heaven*, laughs at the buſie *aſpirings of ſecular greatneſs*, and wonders at the force of that *enchantment*, which engages men with ſo extreme toil, to climb a tottering *pinnacle*, where the ſtanding is uneaſie, and the fall deadly. He that covets to be *rich towards God*, and has enur'd his eyes to that *divine ſplendor* which reſults from the *beauty* of *holineſs*, is not dazled with the *glittering ſhine* of *Gold*; conſiders it as a *vein* of the ſame *earth* he treads on, and deſpiſes that abſurd *partiality* whereof the Prophet accuſes *idolaters*, to employ one part to the meaneſt uſes, and fall down to the other. In a word, he that looks on the *eternal things that are not ſeen*, will through thoſe *opticks* exactly diſcern the *vanity* and *inconſiderableneſs* of all that is *viſible* and *temporary*; and ſo will be equally unmoved with the terrors or allurements of the world, and neither frighted nor flatter'd out of his duty. And he that is thus fortified diſcourages and wearies out his Tempter, deprives him not only of *weapons* but of *heart* too, and drives even *Satan* himſelf to deſperation; and when the Enemy is thus beat out of the *field*, there remains nothing but to enjoy the *victory*. When that *reluctance* and *reſiſtance* of the *corrupt appetite* is ſo weakned and ſubdued, that a man acts with *freedom*, he acts with *pleaſure* too. A *heart* thus *ſet at liberty*, alacriouſly *runs the ways of Gods commandments*: It faring with *it* as with a *Patient* that is preſcrib'd *exerciſe* for *health*; who at firſt perhaps finds *laſſitude* and *trouble* in it: But when the *obſtructions* are remov'd, and *nature* diſburthened of thoſe *noxious humors* that encumbred her, that which was at firſt his *task*, becomes his *recreation*. For we are not to think, that it is any *innate harſhneſs* in *piety* that renders the firſt *eſſays* of it unpleaſant; that is owing only to the *indiſpoſedneſs* of our own Hearts. We are in the Prophets phraſe, *bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke*; and if we be galled and fretted by it, 'tis becauſe of our impatient ſtrivings, and irregular motions

tions under it, the yoke is really no heavier than it is afterwards, when it is more tamely born; and yet the Ease is very different and unequal. And this teaches us a short way to that felicity we now speak of, to wit, That we compose our selves to such a submiss and malleable temper, that Christ may come only to govern us as *sheep*, not to be put to tame us as *Tigers*. Let us withdraw all supplies from our *lusts*, and not by any secret reserved affection give them clancular aids to maintain their *Rebellion*, and then they will not be able long to make any *vigorous opposition*, nor consequently much to disturb the *tranquillity* of those who have thus resign'd themselves to the government of the *Prince of peace*: And if this cannot be done in such an instant, but that there will be some previous displacencies, and uneasie struglings, yet even those like the *Scorpion* carry *Antidote* against their own *stings*, when 'tis consider'd, that they are but the *pangs* of the *new birth*, they will become very supportable by the expectation of that joy to which they tend. An enslaved people think themselves fairly advanc'd to happiness, if they can get but to make head against their oppressors, though they must expect many sore *conflicts* and sharp *engagements* before they become *Victors*: And certainly 'tis matter of inestimable joy to him, who has been under that sad spiritual slavery, to be set thus upon even terms, with his sword in his hand against those, who once had him in such vassalage, that he durst not lift up a thought against them; but especially when 'tis remembred with what *invincible aids* he is backt, such as will ascertain him of *victory* if he do not treacherously defeat himself. And surely he must be of a strange *phlegmatick temper*, whom all these considerations will not enliven, convey into him so much spirit as to make an attempt, and engage him to do that upon so pressing, so great a concern which mere curiosity prompts men daily to in common affairs. And he that is not moulded of this cold and stubborn clay, he that has not lost one of the *elements* of mans composition, and has but a *spark* of *fire* in his temper, will surely have some *warmth* towards this so inviting an *experiment*: And when he has once made it, I doubt not, it will then joyn with the suffrages both of reason and conscience in approbation of *Christs Laws*, and will with *Solomon* pronounce of this spiritual wisdom, *her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. 3. 17.*

Contradicted unjustly by the wicked and profane.

30. And now it must be a strange *violence* of impiety, that must break this *threefold cord*, that shall disannul the joynt *sentence* of all that are competent *Judges* in this matter. This is not the strength of *Sampson* that *brake withs and cords*, but of the *Legion* that *pull'd in pieces fetters and chains*; and though too many men make it their *own work*; yet certainly 'tis only the *Devils intereſt*: He aspires to the rule and government of us; and to that end nothing can be more contributive, than these prejudices we take up against Christs conduct. A *Soul* like a *Nation*, can neither bear *two Legislators*, nor be without *one*: And *Satan* having but that single competitor, our quarrelling with Christs Laws, is virtually an embracing of his. When we send *Christ* that rebellious message; *Nolumus hunc regnare*, we say to the other as the *trees* to the *bramble*, *Judg. 9. 14. come thou and reign over us.* And to this defiance of the one, and invitation of his opposite, he very nearly approaches, that thus defames Christs commands as irrational or severe. The traducing of a government being, we know, the immediate *præludium* to the casting it off; *libelling* the forlorn hope to rebellion. But would God men would soberly weigh whither such a mutinous humor tends; and when our outward *condition* has given us so many pregnant and costly *proofs* of its ruinous *effects*, take caution that it make not the

the like wrack within us: That we do not madly exchange Chriſts *gentle ſervice*, and *glorious rewards*, for Satans *cruel bondage*, and crueller Wages: The *golden chains* of the one which do more adorn than tie us, for the *Iron*, the *Adamantine* links of the other, which bind us till they deliver us over to thoſe *Chains of darkneſs*, where our captivity ſhall be irreverſible. If this ſo reaſonable, ſo neceſſary a care may be admitted; 'twill certainly confute the profane *ſophiſtry* of our age, ſilence our impious *cavils*, and inſtead of providing us of the colour of an auſtere *Maſter* to excuſe our *ſloth*, will engage us to that *diligence* that ſhall ſuperſede the uſe of ſuch *ſhifts*, and then we may hope to ſee *Chriſtianity* have a *Reſurrection-day* again, aſſume a Body ſomewhat of ſolidity and ſubſtance; which now wanders about like a *ghoſt* or *ſpectre*, a *ſhade* or vaniſhing *apparition*, which leaves no footſteps behind it: And to the re-union, O let us all emulouſly contribute, take up every one of us his dry *bones*, and bring them to the *Prophet*, or rather to *Him* who ſpake by that Prophet, to breath upon them, till at laſt they be cemented and inſpirited in active *duty*, to ſhew forth the *Praiſes of that God who hath call'd us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

CHAP. VI.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Partial Obedience.

Partial Conſideration diſcovered by

1. ANother ſort of prepoſterous Conſiderers there are, by whom the *power and force of Chriſtianity* is no leſs obſtructed: And thoſe are they that contrive not how they may moſt *comply* with *it*, but how they may beſt bend it to *comport* with *them*. That rebate its edge, or turn it only againſt ſuch of their corruptions as they have leaſt kindneſs for. That weigh the *precepts* with no other deſign but that of taking the *lighteſt*: Thoſe to which their conſtitutions or other circumſtances carry leaſt repugnance; and come unto the *Goſpel* not as to a *Law*, but to a *Market*; cheapen what they beſt like, and leave the reſt for other cuſtomers.

Partial and unequal Obedience.

2. That thus it is with many, needs no other proof than the variety viſible in the lives of ſeveral profeſſors. *One* man behaves himſelf *modeſtly*, and tells you his *religion* commands him *humility*; yet at the ſame time tranſgreſſes the as ſtrict precept of Juſtice, and will defraud him he bows to. On the contrary *another* is Juſt, but inſolent, and though his Sentence do not bend, expects his *Clients* ſhould. That man owns the purity of his religion in *viſiting the fatherleſs and widows*, yet diſclaims it again, by not *keeping himſelf unſpotted of the world*. This perſon is Abſtemious, but Uncharitable, will drink no *wine*, but thirſts for *bloud*. He prays much, yet curſes more; whileſt he is meek, but indevout. Now while the Rule is one and the ſame, how ſhould it come, that mens Practices ſhould ſo vary, were it not for the unequal Application? Did they take it intire, though there might be difference in the *degrees*, yet ſure not in the *kinds* of their Virtues, and as men would not differ ſo from one another, ſo neither would they from themſelves; there would be then no ſuch thing as a *charitable* Drunkard, a *devout* Oppreſſor, a *chaſt* Miſer; *Monſters* engendred by this unnatural commixture of *light* with *darkneſs*; but *piety* would be uniform and extenſive, and *bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. And till it be thus, *Chriſtianity* can never be thought to have atchiev'd any part of its deſign, which was not aim'd againſt any one *ſingle limb*, but againſt the *whole body* of ſin. Alas! 'tis not

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the lopping off one of the remote *members*, that will render the remaining ones any whit the less vital; the having a *part* less to animate, will rather serve to concenter the spirits, and make them more active in the rest: As we see the *pruning* of Trees makes them more *prolifick*. And this effect is very obvious among men: He who has no general dislike to vice, if he repudiate *one*, 'tis commonly that he may cleave closer to *another*; and what he defaulks from some *dry*, *insipid* sin, is but to make up a *Benjamin*'s Mess for some other more gustful. If the Wanton be *sober*, 'tis odds he thinks *excess* a Rival to his *lust*; if the Proud man be *liberal*, 'tis because *covetousness* is inglorious; such unevennesses are caus'd not by an *unkindness* to any Sin (unless possibly that aversion which natural constitution raises in some) but by a *partiality* to one or more favourite-Vices, for whose better *accommodation*, and *securer reign*, not only Virtue, but other Vices also must give place.

which is the summ of many mens Religion,

3. And this 'tis much to be fear'd will upon a true account, be found to be the *summ* of many mens *piety*, something they think they must pay to the *importunity* of their Religion, which upbraids them so loudly, that they are willing to *stop its mouth*, but yet would do it with as much *frugality*, and good managery as may be, and so consider what 'tis they can best spare; what refuse Sin which brings them in little of satisfaction, and is perhaps in composition with some other more agreeable: And *this* they can be content to devote to the *slaughter*, set it to receive all the *impressions of the sword of the spirit*; and so use it as a *buckler* to their *darling lusts*, to ward off those blows which must else fall heavy on them; but alas! this is not to *obey*, but to *delude*; to ransom a *greater* Sin with a *less*, and to transcribe in this matter the Counsel of *Caiaphas*: To *let one die for the people, that the whole nation perish not.* To make one forlorn guilt a Patriot to the rest, whilst in the *tempest* which threatned a general *shipwrack*, the *precious wares* are preserv'd, by throwing the *less valuable* over-board.

and renders them secure and negligent in many Duties;

4. And truly that is commonly the event; men are so jolly and triumphant when they have worsted a *trivial inconsiderable sin*, as if they had defeated the *whole army*: This poor despicable *spoil* is set up as their *Trophy*, and must, they think, witness for them both to God and man, that they are *good souldiers of Jesus Christ*: They can, like *Saul*, with full confidence meet the *Prophet*, and tell him they have *fulfilled the commandment of the Lord*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 13. though *Agag* and the best *cattle*, the reigning and fattest *sins* be spar'd: And while they are thus secure, their sins will certainly be so also, have no disturbance or disquiet from them, but lie at ease and rest, feed like *Canibals* upon their own kind, be nourisht by the carkasses of those unlucky vices, on whom the exterminating lot hapned to fall; and by that means grow to a prodigious bulk and corpulency. And upon these terms *Satan* himself will allow us to *mortifie some sins*, nay will himself *cast the first stone at them*: And like a rooking *gamester*, purposely lose these *petty stakes*, that he may afterwards sweep the *board*.

Yet well conceited of their Spiritual condition.

5. For if men should give themselves up universally to *all sorts* of Ill, if they should set themselves in a total opposition to *all the documents* of their *profession*, he would lose one of his most useful *engins*; there could be no such thing as a false delusive hope, they might possibly by obstinacy *harden*, or by diversion *gag* Conscience, but they could not bribe and corrupt it, make it sit down well pleas'd and satisfied with it self. For when the *threats* against disobedience shall occur to the mind of one who has in all instances disobey'd, 'tis impossible he should find any *salve*, any way of evading the Thrusts, they make so directly at him: But he who can alledge for

for himſelf that he *obeys in ſome things*, confronts that to all Objections, and reſolves he is not *in the liſt* of the *diſobedient*: One or two ſuch comfortable inſtances are as mighty, as God promis'd the *Iſraelites* ſhould be, *Deut.* 32. 30. *One able to chaſe a thouſand, and two to put ten thouſand to flight*; all fears and miſgiving thoughts are diſſipated and fled before them: And as once the *French King* in his return to the numerous ſwelling titles of the *Spaniard*, thought the bare repetition of *France, France, France*, was a full ballance to them all; ſo when *whole files* of great and ſcandalous Crimes preſent themſelves, *one ſingle virtue* is thought a ſufficient counterpoize. He whoſe Conſcience upbraids him with all Profaneneſs towards *God*, and Inſobriety towards *himſelf:* Yet if he can but anſwer, that he is *juſt to his neighbour*, he thinks he has *quit ſcores*, and fears no farther reckonings: He who is immerſt in all the *filthineſs* both of *fleſh and ſpirit*, has abandon'd his Mind to *pride and envy*, his Body to *luſt and intemperance*; and ſo ſacrificed both thoſe to *Devils:* Yet if he caſt but *ſome grains* of his eſtate upon the Altar; devote any *ſmall part* of that to God, for the uſes of *Piety* or *Charity*; he concludes that *Incenſe* will ſend up a Cloud thick enough to obſcure the other from the *eyes* of Divine Juſtice, and yield ſo ſweet a ſavour, as will perfume him in ſpight of all that Noiſomneſs: So extending old *Tobits* words beyond his meaning, that *alms, though alone, delivereth from death, and cleanſeth from all ſin.* He who is deep in *ſacriledge* and *rebellion*, that can daringly ſwallow repeated deliberate *perjuries*; yet if he can get but the demure tenderneſs, to *fear a ſudden oath*, he is *Chymiſt* enough to extract a *confidence* out of that *fear*, and preſumes that *formal* Civility to Gods name, ſhall expiate all the *real* Violations and Contempts of him: And while men make ſuch uſe of their *partial peace-meal* obedience, it can never be the *Devils intereſt* to diſturb them *in* it, to awake them *out* of their pleaſant dream, or to exact *of* them to depoſite thoſe poor unſignificant *remains* of their Chriſtianity, which ſerve only to make them more *Supine*, not more *Safe*.

The Devils policy is to enſnare a Soul by a ſingle Luſt,

6. Nay, indeed his affairs are ſo ſtated, that to ſome he can and does, and without danger, allow a yet far *greater indulgence*; he can permit them to bid much fairer than this for Heaven, and yet knows the purchaſe is far from being made; he can ſee them caſhier not ſome one *ſingle ſin*, but *whole troops* together, and yet not fear the ſinking of his Cauſe: He can truſt them ſo far, that as the *young man* in the Goſpel, they may be pronounc'd, *Not far from the Kingdom of God:* Yet as long as there is but *one* unmortified Luſt, that can ſend them away *ſad from Chriſt*, his tenure is firm enough. *Herod may hear John Baptiſt gladly*, nay do many things upon it, yet let him but keep *Herodias*, and ſhe will ſoon be able to ſecure both *her ſelf* and *Satan* againſt the danger of that Competition. This is indeed his main advantage, that he can hold faſt by the *ſmalleſt thred*; and whereas to our bliſs a conſpiration and union of all Vertues is required; our *ruine* can ſpring from any *one* ſolitary Crime: *Many rounds* make that Ladder wherewith we muſt ſcale *Heaven:* Whereas *one ſtep* ſerves to precipitate us into the *Abyſſe*; ſo ſadly verifying the Poetical Axiom, *Facilis deſcenſus Averni*. In ſumm, while there is but *any one ſingle ſin* indulg'd to, that is the *Devils tedder*; and though it ſhould be imagin'd ſo looſe, as to give men ſcope to range over *all other ſorts* of Virtues, to taſte the ſweet and feed liberally on them; yet ſtill the *beaſt* is in the power of him who has fixt the line, not only to be finally led away to *ſlaughter*, but alſo to have the *length ſhortned*, and be either put out of the *reach*, or quite removed from the *view* of thoſe *pleaſant paſtures*.

whereby he is easily tempted to more and greater sins;

7. For though the security rais'd by such an ununiform piety is in many so exactly apportioned to *Satans interest*, that he has no cause to wish the change of his tenure; yet where the circumstances are such, as will make it useful, he can easily twist his *thred* into a *Cable*. When he thinks one *Monarch* Lust too mild a regiment, he can set up an *Athenian* Tyranny, or which is yet worse, let in the whole *populacy* of Sin upon the Soul, which like the *Ægyptian Locusts* shall overrun and devour it, *not leave any green thing on the ground*, and that this is in his power we have too much reason to conclude. He is, we know, a cunning *sophister*, and if he has abus'd us so far as to impose *one* sin upon us, he may thence very regularly deduce *many more*; as *one* false Premise admitted, may be improved into *thousands* of false Conclusions. Indeed supposing a man resolute to adhere to one sin, he may with very good *Logick* perswade him to multitudes of others. There are but two *Objections* usually made to any Temptation; either the *offence*, or the *danger*; and these are usually objectable to one sin as well as to another: So that this *dilemma* readily offers it self: Either it is reasonable to buy a *pleasure* at that price, or it is not: If it be, then contrive that the *crime* be pleasant, and that brings its *dispensation* with it: If it be not, then why dost thou live in this one sin in despight of both guilt and punishment? The *latter* part of the *Dilemma* 'tis no part of Satans business to press; but the *former* he has too much advantage of pursuing successfully; if he can but dress up a temptation to look invitingly, the business is done. So ridiculous a thing is an *uneven Piety*, that even laughs it self out of countenance, and wants only temptation to become *uniform Vice*. How absurdly looks it, to see a man run away with *Joseph* from the embraces of his *Mistress*, and yet with full as great a speed accompany *Gehazi* in the pursuit of a *bribe*; and how obvious is it to conclude that the former assault was improsperous only because not manag'd with the *right weapon*; that he might have been *hir'd*, that would not be *wooed?* What a *mockery* is it for a man to be *zealous for God*, and *rebellious against his King?* As in the reverse, for a man to be *true to his King*, and a *rebel to his God?* And who can but think, that had either of the averted *Crimes* been cookt to their *Palats*, they might have chang'd *Messes?* Indeed 'tis not imaginable by what rules of discourse, he that embraces *one sin* should reject *another*: If it be done only upon *fancy* and *humor*, as the *repulst vice* will have reason to complain of great *partiality*, when as bad as it self is receiv'd and cherish'd; so it points out a way to attacque him more prosperously: Let it shape it self to the fancy; and sure *Satan*, who can *transform himself to an Angel of light*, can soon work that easie *change*: Let the *younger* Brother get on the cloaths of the favourite *Esau*, transform it self into the shape and interest of the darling sin, and it need not doubt of a free *admission*. But all this while to pretend *conscience* for such an *abstinence*, is of all other pleas the most absurd; for why should he scruple at one, that abandons himself to another? As S. *James* argues concerning the *guilt*, so may we for the *act* of Sin: He that said, *Do not commit adultery*, said also, *Do not kill*; and 'tis abusive mockery, the Souldiers *Ave Rex*, to bow to his *authority* in the *one*, and resist it in the *other*. Thus unhappy is the case of him who entertains one sin, his enclosure is broken down, and he's a Common for all: He is left destitute of a reply to any temptation, and like a *bashful* person, will be in danger of *yielding*, because he is asham'd to *deny*: And this I doubt not, many have found experimentally true; some sins have been committed not so much upon the force of inclination, as to be consentaneous to themselves, to silence the upbraidings of their understandings

for

for acting ſo unevenly, it being impoſſible to give a reaſonable account, why *this* and not *that*, or *that*; for when by *one bold wilful ſin* a man is enter'd into a *ſtate of hoſtility* with God, 'tis not a *tenderneſs in all others* will make up the *breach*: And then they think the rule of known enemies takes place, where all civilities are diſclaim'd, and the quarrel manag'd to the moſt advantage. The reſolv'd *Adulterer* could perhaps without much difficulty be juſt; but when he conſiders that that one *Helena* of his will certainly make a war, he thinks 'tis an impertinent *niceneſs* to loſe a good prize, or diſmiſs his *covetouſneſs* while he reſolves to retain his *luſt*. The incorrigible *drunkard* could perchance eaſily enough be *chaſte*, but when he remembers that *drunkenneſs excludes him from the Kingdom of Heaven*: Having made that ſale of his eternal inheritance, he thinks 'tis but good husbandry to get as much as he can for it: So *treacherous a gueſt* is any *one Sin* admitted, and lodg'd in the heart, it deſpoils it of all its armour of defence, leaves it nothing wherewith to guard it ſelf againſt any aſſailant; and be it *never ſo ſmall* a one, 'tis like thoſe *little thieves*, which being put in at the window, ſet the doors open to all the reſt.

8. But perhaps this *danger* may be thought in ſome degree warded by the *natural temper* and conſtitution of men, which neceſſarily renders them unapt to *contradictory vices*, and ſo will ſecure them at leaſt from ſo many as are diſagreeable to their Temper: But if this ſhould be granted, yet it confeſſedly leaves them open to all others, and that were certainly bad enough: He that is as *wicked*, as his *complexion* cannot only encline, but permit him to be, will not want much of the utmoſt number of ſins: But whatever we can ſuppoſe that to ſtrike off from the tale; yet in the ſecond place, 'tis very much to be fear'd, that will defaulk nothing of the weight; he that ſins to the height of his *appetite*, perhaps *power*, ſhall he be ever the more *innocent*, becauſe there were ſome *nauſeated ſins*, which he had *not* Self-denial enough to commit? God abſolves us in proportion to the *rectitude* of our Wills, not the *niceneſs* of our Complexions: He that wills to purſue whatever he can find *guſtful*, how impious ſoever; ſhall it be *virtue* in him that ſome Sins are *unſavoury* and diſagreeing to his *Palate*? If it ſhould, there may ſo many extrinſick things be by Analogy brought in, either to ſwell or abate the accounts of our ſin, that we ſhall be much to ſeek in the eſtimate of it.

except ſuch as his natural complexion is averſe to,

9. But in the third place even theſe very averſions are no infallible preſervative; for if they happen to be more moderate and remiſs, than the love of ſome other ſin; that *predominant inclination* will ſubdue thoſe *diſlikes*, when ever its *intereſt* is to be ſerv'd by thoſe otherwiſe not *guſtful commiſſions*. There is nothing more ordinary than to ſee one appetite purſued to the violation of another. A man perhaps hates *drunkenneſs*, not only as a *beſtial* but *uneaſie vice*; yet if his *love* to Gain exceed his *diſlike* to that; when that is requiſite to make up the price of a *good bargain*, that *averſion* muſt ſtoop, and give way. A man deſpiſes *ſwearing* as an *inſipid impertinent ſin*; yet if he ſet any great value upon *being in the mode*, and complying with the *gentile Dialect*, that will ſoon debaſe him to what he ſo much contemn'd: And truly there is ſcarce any other account to be given of that great and fooliſh ſin. But in no other inſtance is this ſo notoriouſly viſible, as in that of *duelling*. I need not ſingle out any one mans particular *inclination*; the nature of mankind doth certainly avert both killing and being kill'd: Yet when that *Phantaſm*, that *Chimæra* honour, has once poſſeſt the mind, no reluctance of humanity is able to make head againſt it; but it commands as uncontroul'dly, as the *Centurion*

which the habit of other ſins will in time conquer and overcome,

in the Gospel, *says to this man go and he goes, to another come and he comes:* Nay as tyrannically as the great *Cham* of *Tartary*, who as an Essay of his Soveraignty *commands whole troops to ride down precipices*; nay these Aversions are not only thus violently subdued by some foreign *lust*, but are many times destroy'd even by *force* of that very *vicious principle* which gave them *birth*; for we mistake if we think they are always vertuous, or so much as innocently founded; Vice is often at civil wars with it self; and the vehement *inclination* to one, ingenders a *displacency* to another; but yet such a *riddle* is this *mystery of Iniquity*, that upon the very same *basis* is built both the *abhorrence* and *commission* of the same Sin. For *example*, a Proud man as much hates to *fawn* and *flatter others*, as he loves to be flatter'd himself; yet let his *pride* but once work the other way, and set him upon an *ambitious project*, then all the mean condescensions imaginable are with ease digested, he can crouch and prostrate, and as the *Psalmist* speaks, *fall down and humble himself*, that by that descent he may rebound to the height he aims at: But still pride is the common cause of these so distant effects. In like manner the Riotous Prodigal detests *covetousness*, looks upon it as so sordid and base, that he brands even *prudent frugality* as approaching too near it; yet let him but once find the *springs* to grow dry which should feed his *luxury*; when he feels his Riot begins to exhaust and prey upon it self, then even that *despised Covetousness* shall be call'd in to its aid, to dig *metal*, for the Furnace to melt, and so by a strange *Antiperistasis*, *prodigality* shall beget *rapine*. Thus unhappily *prolifick* is every Sin, that it carries in its bowels the *seed* and *principle* even of those that seem the most *Heterogeneous*; and then how shall a man that has admitted but any one such teeming lust be secur'd that it shall not thus propagate, till his *Soul* become a mere *desart*, fill'd with all sorts of *wild* and *noxious creatures*.

except restrain'd by the grace of God, which such men have no reason to expect.

10. There is but *one hope* imaginable to interpose, and that is that *Gods grace* shall prevent this exorbitant *growth of impiety* in him, and I acknowledge that is sufficient to do it, where it may have its kindly *operation*; but where it has so, it will uniformly suppress *all sin*, and therefore where *any one* continues in force and vigour, 'tis manifest that *operation* of Grace is obstructed, and such a man I should desire soberly to consider what assurance he has, that he who has so evacuated Gods grace in one instance, shall not do so in another? If *in spight* of that grace he can be lustful, why shall he not be as able to resist it *in favour* of Drunkenness, Sacriledge, Rebellion, or any other crime to which he shall at any time have appetite? Can he imagine that God sends forth an irresistible strength against some sins, whilst in others he permits men a power of repelling his *Grace*? that were to transcribe the *Syrians* absurd Fansie, that he is *a God of the hills and not of the valleys:* No certainly, he who has his own unhappy experience to attest the possibility of frustrating the Divine succours in one particular, has too sure grounds to infer the like in others. Nay alas, it does not only infer it by way of *argument* and *deduction*, but it is very apt to produce it by way of *cause* and *efficiency:* We gain a readiness to any thing by custom and assuefaction, and he who has habitually oppos'd *Grace* in the defence of a *Lust*, has deliver'd himself from that modesty which makes the first defiance uneasie, and so runs on with ease and boldness to future resistance. It fares with men in this violation of *Gods grace*, as it does in that of his *Patrimony*, the first Sacriledge is lookt on with some horror, and men are fain to devise *arguments* and colours to delude their reluctating *Consciences*; but when they have once made the breach, their scrupulosity soon retires; one draught of that *impious gain*, has such a *stupefying effect*, that they can without

without check ſwallow on, till the Sin flame ſo fiercely, that nothing but mere want of Matter can extinguiſh it. But admit it were poſſible for a man to be ſecur'd of his own compliance with ſome part of reſtraining grace whileſt he impugnes it in others, yet who ſhall aſcertain him of that grace? It being God's, implies 'tis not in our power, he may ſurely do what he will with his own, and though his *promiſe* has made a ſure *entail* of it to all thoſe, who *humbly ſeek* and *diligently uſe* it: Yet it no where engages that it ſhall be the *portion* of any other; much leſs that it ſhall importunately and endleſly renew its aſſaults on thoſe who have often repulſt and put it to flight: In that caſe *Gods reſolution* concerning the *old world*, becomes appliable, *My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*; and *Chriſt* who forbids us to *caſt our pearls before Swine*, will certainly never proſtitute what is infinitely more precious, his *Grace* to thoſe, who have ſo long trampled it under their feet; and ſo thoſe muſt be concluded to have done, who have perſevered in any one ſin; for Grace is uniformly oppoſite to all, and therefore the cleaving to any is defiance and affront to it. But we need not the help of inferences and deduction, the threats of God are expreſs in this matter: The *Talent* is decreed to be taken from the *unprofitable ſervant*, who has not employed it to the proper uſe, and ſuch infallibly is *every man* who has not actuated the *Grace* given him to the ſubduing of every *reigning ſin*; and the *reprobate mind* mention'd in Scripture as the moſt diſmal of all Plagues, the νοῦς ἀδόκιμος, which yields not to the melting and the purging force of Fire, and therefore does conſign to that of Hell, is founded upon the voluntary rejection of God in particular inſtances, *Rom.* 1. How then can he, that in any one ſingle thing ſo rejects him, aſſure himſelf that ſhall not be the event of it? That he who would not have Chriſt rule entirely in his *heart*, ſhall at once be put out of his *government* and *protection?* have all thoſe ſpiritual aids withdrawn, which ſhould either aſſiſt him to *good*, or fortifie him againſt *ill*; and like an out-law'd perſon be expos'd to the outrage of all that will aſſault him.

11. And now would God this might be ſadly pondered, that men would not be their own *Sirens*, and entertain themſelves with thoſe deceitful *melodies*, which will end in *howlings and gnaſhings of teeth*; that they would not think their having ſome few vertues, and but ſome few vices will ſerve to ſatisfie the deſign, or procure them the rewards of their Chriſtianity: For if they ſhould continue in this poſture, and not be tempted to grow worſe, they may certainly conclude, 'tis becauſe Satan finds they need not. And can they be *proud* of that Virtue which the Devil himſelf will allow them? And think themſelves *good* enough when they are as bad as he wiſhes them? But even in this they have no other tenure than his Will. When he pleaſes for his intereſt, or even for his divertiſement and recreation, he may hurry them to all that is moſt enormous; convert their *Hypocriſie* to *profaneneſs*, their *partial* Piety to *univerſal* Ungodlineſs; they have nothing to interpoſe in their own Defence, not ſo much as a reaſonable argument to oppoſe to him, they have made a voluntary ſale of themſelves for one or more beloved ſin, and now as his *vaſſals* he may impoſe on them what others he pleaſes: And by their doting affection to their *Rachel*, take advantage alſo to obtrude the deſpis'd *Leah* upon them. And how wretched, how deplorable is this ſtate? What a *Piety* is this that we muſt owe to the *Devil*, while we can be no better than he will let us?

The Devil is content we ſhould be partially good,

12. Yet this is without *Hyperbole*, the condition of every man that is not ſincerely uniformly Chriſtian; every indulg'd ſin gives *Satan* livery and ſeiſin of his heart, and a power to diſpoſe of it as he pleaſes. I know men

So he can but enſnare us by any one Luſt.

are

are apt to flatter themselves with other hopes, and think that those obediences they pay to God shall like a pre-ingagement disannul all after contracts made by guilt, and put them into the possession of Him who is able to *bind* that *strong man.* But God will not be accessary to such a fraud, even towards the Devil; while they keep the price, enjoy that pleasure or profit wherewith he bought them, God will never interpose to defeat him of his purchase.

God will not share our obedience with the Devil.

13. And as God will not thus forcibly wrest them out of his hands, much less will he descend to a capitulation and composition with him. *God is a jealous God,* and what *jealous husband* did ever by compact divide his right with the *Adulterer?* Where he finds a persevering disloyalty he gives a bill of divorce and disclaims his relation. Yet so befotted are men, as to hope God will ratifie that alienation they have made of one part of their heart, and contentedly enjoy the rest; and as competitors use sometimes to do, share with his Rival. But alas! that immortal quarrel will not be thus taken up, the difference between these irreconcileable *Antagonists* will not be so compromised. God disdains such a treaty, nor will ever come so much as to an interview with his enemy, within the lists and recesses of one Heart. And while men labour such an accord, they are but combining with *Satan* against *God* and their own *Souls:* He knows well, that while he holds any part, God will have none, and so the whole falls to him, and then he may very safely be modest, and demand but moderately, and by that seeming difference and yielding, gain more than by all his most eager contendings. I suppose every man will disown the having this ridiculous design of compounding the strife between *Heaven* and *Hell*; but certainly it is the natural interpretation of such partial obediences; when two *Litigants* contend for something which I have in my keeping, if I divide it between them, is it not obvious to conclude I desire to compose the dispute and satisfie both parties, and is not this the very case here? 'Tis true indeed, it carries a very absurd sound, but then how more absurd is it for men to act at such a rate, that when 'tis represented to them in the truest colours, themselves are ashamed to own what they have done? And this calls loudly upon them to put themselves out of the lash of their own discipline; to recover such an innocence that they may not be forc'd with *David* to sentence themselves, when that their crimes appear in the light disguise of a *Parable.*

We must renounce all sin, to avoid the Devils snares;

14. And this indeed is the only proper use of all these considerations, the danger and folly are as *unuseful* as *unpleasant* speculations, unless it be in order to the reforming that wherein both are founded. Let them consider themselves, as engaged in those wild projects which even themselves look on with scorn: As ensnar'd in that unhappy contract which has rendred them part of the *Devils* possession, and contrive how they may obliterate that reproach, and disintangle their Mortgag'd Souls.

15. And for this there is but one way imaginable, and that is by quitting their hands of that which they took as the valuable consideration in that mad bargain; restoring *Satans* coyn to him, not only *principal* but *use* also: Casting away the main sin and all the little appendages, which like off-sets have shot out from that root; retaining nothing that has his mark and impress upon it, that so he may not pretend to any thing of theirs by right of barter or exchange. This, and this only is the way to dissеise him of his Estate, to cancel those fatal Indentures which bound them to him, and till this be done, as long as they keep any part of his *wages of Iniquity,* his title remains in full force, they are still his *servants,* his *vassals.*

16. Even

16. Even the *redemption of Chriſt* has no efficacy towards the enfranchizing of ſuch; for though it proclaim an univerſal *Jubilee*, yet it forces liberty upon none; he that will nail his Ear to the door-poſt and defie a manumiſſion, may continue his ſlaviſh life ſtill, and indeed though Chriſts death was deſign'd to reſcue us from the power of Satan; yet the firſt eſſay of that reſcue was to redeem us from our vain converſation: And where that is not done, which is ſo eſſentially fundamental to all the reſt, 'tis not poſſible any other part of that Redemption ſhould be atchiev'd, unleſs we will confound that order of *Nature* as well as *Grace*, and make the *conſequent* precede the *antecedent*. *otherwiſe no benefit by Chriſts Redemption.*

17. Let no man therefore upon any vain hopes delay the one only expedient to his ſecurity, but pay back the *earneſt peny* he has received from *Satan*, fling away his *ſin*, how pleaſant or profitable ſoever, with the greateſt Abhorrence, as knowing 'tis the *price of bloud*, and that not only his *Saviours*, but his *own* too; and this immediately, leſt the forfeiture be irreverſible. We know the danger of lapſing time in caſe of Mortgage, but here our danger is greater, becauſe the time is ſo uncertain; for though God had nothing elſe to do in the whole tranſaction ('twas wholly our own work) yet 'tis he that aſſigns the time of forfeiture: He alone knows how far we may go in ſin, before we paſs the poſſibility of a retreat; how long he will be provok'd before he ſuffer his whole diſpleaſure to ariſe; and how many repellings of his Grace, and quenchings of his Spirit they are, to which his deſertions are apportion'd. *Pharaohs* heart was hardned by God after the *Eighth reſiſtance*, and we have no ſecurity but ours may be *ſooner*, yet if that ſhould be taken as the ſtanding meaſure, how dreadful an abode would it make to many of us? Who is there that has eſpouſed any one *beloved ſin*, that has not much oftner repeated the *acts* of it, every one of which is a reſiſtance and contumacy againſt God? Who is there that has not done it againſt ſo many expreſs warnings and loud calls of God in his own *Conſcience*? Which renders it yet a fuller *parallel*, and 'tis to be fear'd, too many agree with it even in the laſt and higheſt circumſtance, that of the *Plagues* too by an obſtinate perſiſting after ſo many *Judgments* ſent to mollifie and reclaim them; and then where the *premiſes* are the ſame, 'tis too likely the *concluſion* may be ſo alſo. *The great danger of obſtinate perſiſting in any one ſin;*

18. I ſhall not wiſh any Perſon ſo ſtrictly to apply this caſe, as to conclude, that he is already in this ſtate, but I could wiſh all men would apply it ſo far, as to infer how *poſſible*, nay how *probable* it is, that the very next reſiſtance ſhall put them in it. 'Tis not *Pharaohs* being a *Heathen* and they *Chriſtians* that will give them any ſecurity; it being no part of the Goſpel-Covenant, that men ſhall be ever the longer allowed to trample upon Grace. All the difference it makes is rather on the other ſide; the contempts are enhans'd to a higher guilt, and conſequently, the fewer acts may now ſerve to fill up the meaſure. And if their experience teſtifie to them, that in their particular God has us'd a greater long-ſuffering, than he has given any grounds to expect, if the guilt of their Conſciences teſtifie that they have committed many more acts; and yet ſome remaining tenderneſſes and regrets witneſs alſo, that they are not yet given up to an utter hardneſs and obduration, O let them not preſume themſelves ſafe, becauſe they are not utterly deſperate; but lay their hearts open to be ſtampt and impreſt by grace, before they grow utterly inflexible; timely conſider what is the deſign of this *longanimity*, and without any more ſtruglings and reſiſtance ſuffer it to attain its aim and *lead them to repentance.* *the guilt whereof is greater in Chriſtians than Heathens,*

19. For

and disposeth to utter hardness and impenitency.

19. For though their Souls be not yet wholly petrified, yet how know they in what an instant that unhappy *Metamorphosis* may be wrought; or if it should not be so sudden, yet 'tis certain every act of sin makes gradual approaches towards it: So that if God should not inflict it by way of *punishment*, yet the mere force of Habit would produce it by way of *natural efficacy*: And to be convinc'd of this, I should require no more, but that men would reflect, and see what effects it has already wrought, how far it has advanc'd towards that fatal point. Let them send their thoughts back through every stage and period of their sin, and observe whether as that has grown, so their tenderness and reluctance of Conscience has not abated and decreas'd: Let them but recollect what regrets and disquiets they had, when they ventur'd upon the first unlawful commission, and compare it with their present, and I doubt not they will discern a great inequality; they will find that every act of sin hath allayed somewhat of the sharpness of those pangs, and proportionably to the frequency of the repetition they approach toward insensible: And then let him whose older Habit has multiplied those *Acts*, sadly consider how few *steps* he has to the end of his unhappy journey, though no extrinsick concurrent should hasten his pace. But when Gods desertion shall, as for ought he knows it may the next minute supervene: That as a full and violent *Wind* drives him in an instant, not to the *Harbour*, but on the *Rock* where he will be irrecoverably split.

The wilfulness of any sin is the highest aggravation thereof.

20. Nor let any man fortifie himself against these terrors, by hoping that his own *single* (perhaps small) sin shall not have this destructive force; for if it be *wilful* it carries in it that which is properly the *malignity* of all sin, to wit, a resistance and opposition against God, and this is so *mortal* a Venome, that the least Dose of it is *deadly*, as a man may as certainly be poison'd by a *dram of Arsenick*, as with the *largest draught*.

The smallest sin not to be allow'd in.

21. The more natural inference lies the other way, if it be but a single or petty sin, 'tis so much the easier to part with; he that is bound with a *strong Cable*, or with a multitude of lesser Cords, may pretend some *necessity* of his Captivity, from the strength of his bonds; but he that is tied with *one slender string*, such as one resolute struggle would be sure to break: He is *prisoner* only to his own *sloth* or humor, and who will pity his *thraldom*, where 'tis so apparently his *choice*? Do not therefore say my sin is inconsiderable, and therefore I need not *relinquish* it; but my sin is inconsiderable, therefore I need not *keep* it. So slight a pleasure I may part with and find no miss: This pedling profit I may resign and 'twill be no breach in my Estate. And if *Christ* require a renunciation of *those sins* which are as the *Hand and Eye*, shall I scruple to depositе *those* which are but as the *Hair or Nails*?

The lesser the sin, the greater the guilt in not parting with it.

22. Nay, he may yet argue higher, and from the smalness of the sin deduce the enhansement of the Guilt: Great acquisitions carry some temptation in their face, but despicable prizes do rather avert than tempt. 'Twas the sign of a *common harlot* to be *hired with a kid*, *Gen.* 38. and sure he must be of a strange prostitute Soul, that can adulterate for such low trivial wages. To dishonour God, though the *whole world* were to be acquir'd by it, were *great impiety*; but to do it for *handfuls of Barley* and *pieces of Bread*, *Ezek.* 13. 19. himself brands as a yet higher pitch. And sure it argues a very light esteem of God, when one poor contemptible lust shall be able to overpoize him in our hearts.

Folly to endanger our Souls for a single Lust,

23. Nor is the *folly* less than the *profaneness*, when there is but one *Jonah* to be cast over-board, 'tis the greater madness to hazard a *wrack*; and let such

ſuch a man pretend what he pleaſes in extenuation of his ſin, make that appear never ſo minute and deſpicable, yet 'tis apparent all the love which other men ſcatter and diſtribute upon ſeveral, he has united and concentred in this one luſt. The moſt *doting affection* when it is ſummed up can amount to no more than *this*, that it makes a man expoſe himſelf to the greateſt *pain*, the greateſt *loſs* for the thing beloved. And this is moſt viſible here, *Hell* is as certainly acquir'd, and *Heaven* as certainly forfeited by *one* ſin as *many*; and then though there may be odds in other reſpects, yet what is there in this, between this more *modeſt* and the moſt *licentious* Sinner, but that the *former* puts the ſame value upon one, that the *other* does upon many ſins, and ſells his Soul ſo much the cheaper.

the pleaſure and profit whereof is but ſmall.

24. And now would God ſuch men would review their *bargain*, ſoberly conſider what there is in this *Idoliz'd ſin* of theirs, which ſhould exact ſuch *coſtly ſacrifices*. Let him whoſe long intimacy and experience has given him acceſs to its moſt ſecret receſſes, that has rifled its bowels, and knows the utmoſt whether of pleaſure or profit that lies there conceal'd: Let him I ſay, that is thus qualified for it, make an exact inventory of its wealth, and then let him compare it with what he is to pay for it; weigh its flat and *momentany Pleaſures*, with thoſe moſt tranſcending and *perpetual Joys* which are *at Gods right hand*; its baſe and periſhing commodities, with thoſe unfailing treaſures in Heaven; and then judge of his purchaſe in reſpect of that part of his price: And if that be not convincement enough, let him weigh the other alſo: Thoſe ſad *pains* which are too *intolerable* to be ſuffer'd, and yet ſo *eternal*, that they can never ceaſe to be ſuffer'd, and think whether that be not too dear a rate for that pleaſure, whoſe guſt is ſo little, and whoſe duration is leſs: Or what *profit* he will have in the revenue of his ſin, that *Gold and Silver* which will finally *eat his fleſh as it were fire*, *Ja.* 5. 3. and prove the unhappy *fuel of his flames*.

All ſin and vice to be entirely renounc'd.

25. From all theſe *premiſſes*, certainly Reaſon and Religion do equally infer the ſame *concluſion*, to wit, that men ſhould not tolerate themſelves one minute in any known ſin of how ſmall a ſize ſoever it be; nor ſo impertinently betray their Souls to ruine for that which they call light and trivial; and is ſo indeed in reſpect of the *acqueſt*, but overwhelmingly ponderous in regard of the *effects* and pernicious conſequents. And O that mens practices might evince them to have made this juſt deduction, that thoſe who have in many things preſerv'd an *innocence*, would not be ſo ill husbands as to forfeit all the *advantage* of that Care for want of extending it a little farther, not ſuffer the whiter parts of their Soul to be diſcolour'd or tincted by the reflection of one crimſon ſin; but rather let their tears waſh that into a whiteneſs, that they may be uniform and of a piece. For though *Jacob* clad his darling *Joſeph* in a party-colour'd garment; yet God owns none either for favourite-*Son*, or ſo much as *Servant*, that he finds ſo arrayed. The *followers of the Lamb* are all clad in *white*, and in that attire we muſt be ſure to put our ſelves, if we mean to go in with him to the *marriage*. And ſince the Goſpel is the invitation to that feaſt, let none imagine he has complied with it till he have thus fitted himſelf: till then he affronts and *baffles* his Chriſtianity, ſends it away empty without its errand; nay, which is worſe, *proſtitutes* and profanes it, makes it ſerve only for a *Gourd*, that he may ſit under the ſhadow of it, and commit his ſins the more undiſturb'd; but let him remember that he is all this while breeding that *worm*, which will ſmite this *Gourd*, and leave him unſheltered to that ſcorching *wrath* of God, which will make the improvement of *Jonahs* paſſionate wiſh, that God would take away his life, his moſt rational Deſire; render not Death only, but Annihilation alſo as *eligible*, as it will be *Impoſſible*.

CHAP. VII.

A Survey of the Mischiefs arising from Mistakes concerning Repentance.

Great mistakes about Repentance:

1. ANother dangerous Underminer of Christian Practice is the many affected mistakes in the business of *Repentance*. Men look upon that as the grand *recipe* of the Gospel, and infallible *Catholicon* against all their spiritual *maladies*; and so far they judge right, for so indeed it is. But when they proceed to compound this soveraign *Medicine* for their own use, they do it most deceitfully; leave out the principal and most operative *ingredients*: And by being such ill *Apothecaries*, defame the Gospel as the *Dispensatory*, and *Christ* as the *Physician*, and likewise ruine themselves as the *Patients*. But of those who make this imperfect and defective *composition*, all do it not alike; some leave out one part, some another, and some so many, that they retain nothing of its substance and reality: Eat out all the *heart* and vertue of it, and leave only an empty *shell*, the gilding, as it were, of the *Pill*, the Form and mere outside of *Repentance*.

Some place Repentance only in outward gestures and appearances;

2. In this latter rank I place those who suffer *repentance* to pass no farther than their Frontiers, and Out-works, assign it its quarters in the *superficies* of the man, the *Face*, or *Tongue*, or *Gesture*; but if it attempt to penetrate any deeper, if it send but one serious thought to alarm the heart, then like the *Edomites* against *Israel*, *Num.* 20. all the forces are mustered to impede its passage; such *formal* Penitents as these all ages have produc'd. Christ tells us of those who *disfigur'd their faces*, *Matth.* 6. 16. put on, as it were, a vizard only to act this part: And *Esay* 58. 5. long before describes them, by the *bowing down the head like a Bull-rush*, and certainly the race of them is not worn out in our days; a demure or rather a lugubrious *look*, a sad or whining *tone*, makes up, 'tis to be fear'd, the *summ* of many mens Humiliations. Nay, as the world has of late gone, that alone were but a modest pretence: Such theatrical *forms* stickle hard for the *prize*, not of that one part, but of all religion: A *distorted countenance* is made the Mark of an *upright heart*, and none is thought to speak the Language of *Canaan*, that dresses it not in an uncouth sound: And then what wonder is it, that they are impatient others should *worship God*, as *David* invites, *in the beauty*, while themselves chuse to do it, in the Deformity *of holiness*.

others in a bare acknowledgment and confession of sin.

3. But others make somewhat a fairer advance towards *repentance*, by taking in some of those things which are indeed its *necessary concomitants*; of this kind is in the first place *confession of Sin*: And this after some sort is stuck at by few; no man who hath not herded himself with the worst sort of *Fanaticks*, imagines himself sinless, or pretends to be thought so by others, but will very readily acknowledge to all the world that he is a *sinner*: And as to *men*, so especially and more solemnly to *God*. Every man that but offers at praying at all, thinks Confession a necessary Branch of his devotion: All publick *forms* have ever carried that in the *front*, as supposing it the most principal, universal, and daily requisite to the lapsing state of humane corruption: And perhaps 'tis the general innate perswasion of this, that hath secured that part of our *Liturgie*, from those impertinent cavils, which have particularly aim'd at most other members of it. And I suppose this is as frequent in the *Closet* as in the *Church*: The only fear is, that there it is as loose and general too: That those private and particular guilts which are neither fit nor possible to be distinctly

inserted

inſerted in *publick*, do many times loſe their place even in *private* Confeſſions alſo. The ſhortneſs and the eaſe of general forms being very likely to recommend them to thoſe whoſe numerous ſins threaten too great a length, and whoſe confus'd ſnarl'd conſciences render it difficult, thus to pull out thred by thred: But where *Sins* are thus moulded up in a *lump*, they will like great *maſſes of Pills* or Confections keep the more undecay'd, retain more of their *ſtrength* and *vigour*. So that *ſuch* Confeſſions are very indulgent to *Satans intereſt*, who fears not the impreſſions that can be made upon him, while his *body* remains entire: The great execution then beginning when 'tis broken and ſcatter'd, and each ſin is ſingled out for a particular purſuit: And where that is not attempted, the war can never be ſucceſsful, nor thought in earneſt.

Confeſſion of ſin without forſaking it, is unacceptable to God.

4. But ſuppoſe this be done; and by exact enumeration each ſin is parted from its fellows, as when a *conqueror* purſues the *flying troops* of routed Enemies: Yet if this be all, if *quarter* be allowed, and any mercy given, no *real prize* is gain'd by this atchievement. He who recounts his ſins with milder purpoſe towards them than utter exciſion, he makes no approach towards the eſſential part of Repentance. He may bring out large *Catalogues* of his ſins, and call them *confeſſions*; but he may better expreſs his own ſence, if he term them rather *inventories* of his goods, for ſuch 'tis apparent he reckons them, whilſt he reſolves to keep them. Indeed there is not a more abſurd piece of *Pageantry*, than theſe *formal* Confeſſions, and ſuch as ſhews how little *God* is conſider'd in his great Attribute, *the ſearcher of hearts*. 'Tis certain no man would hope to attone an offended ſuperior, by a ſubmiſs acknowledgment of his fault, did he know that his purpoſe of reiterating it were diſcern'd: And what a tacite *blaſphemy* is it then, to treat *God* at ſuch a rate, as preſumes him as *deceivable* as a poor *Mortal*; and ſure this were a ſtrange Ingredient in *repentance*. We look on it as a *high* pitch of impiety boaſtingly to avow our ſins, and it deſerves to be conſider'd whether this kind of confeſſing them have not ſome affinity with it. Should I tell a man I have injur'd and provok'd you thus and thus, and ſo I reſolve to do again at the next opportunity: I refer it to common conſtruction, whether this were not to *juſtifie*, not retract the unkindneſs. Now what I ſuppoſe thus ſaid to man, is in the ſecret purpoſe of our heart, no leſs articulately ſpoken to God, who needs not our words to diſcern our meaning. Therefore whoever intends to *repeat* his ſins, nay does not ſeriouſly intend to *forſake* them, does in truth maintain and defend his vicious practice, how loudly ſoever his Tongue accuſes it. And ſuch *clamors* are but like the feign'd Quarrels of combin'd *cheats*, in order to delude ſome third perſon. But alas, the ſcene is here unluckily laid, for God will not be mock'd, nor will the *Mercy* promis'd to him that confeſſeth and *forſaketh*, ever reach him that confeſſeth and *retaineth*. Confeſſion is no farther acceptable than as it either flows from, or tends to beget an abhorrence of Sin, and abſtracted from thoſe qualifications it becomes loathſome and diſtaſtful to God. Alas, can we think our *Hiſtorical* vein ſo pleaſant; that he ſhall be delighted with the *narrative* of thoſe crimes, whoſe perpetration he deteſted? Can it be *Incenſe* in his noſtrils, to have our *Dunghils* diſplayed? Or can his pure eyes be gratified with ſuch polluted proſpects? True indeed, he gladly deſcends to all this as a *Phyſician*; naſeates not our *fouleſt ulcers*, when we bring them for *cure*: But when like *beggars* we make them openly our form of addreſs, and dread nothing more than their *healing*; certainly their View will only excite his *indignation*, not his pity. And this, 'tis to be fear'd,

abodes sadly to many of us; 'tis our vulgar Objection to the *Romanist*, that they make their confessions contributive rather to their *confidence* than to their *reformation*: What their share is in that guilt, I shall not here examine, but I may too truly pronounce they have not enclos'd it; that black circle of Sin and *confess*, Confess and *sin*, encompasses as well *Protestants* as *Papists*; if possibly not quite so many, the cause 'tis doubtful is (what we need not boast) not that More of us confess *aright*, but that Fewer confess *at all*. But of those that do, if we may but cross-examine, and interrogate their *actions* against their *words*, these will soon confess (and that not *auricularly*, but in a loud and audible voice) the *invalidity* of their solemnest Confessions. When we see a man that *yesterday* kept a Humiliation, *to day* trampling on the necks, invading the possessions of his Brethren, we need no other proof how vainly and unprofitably, if not how hypocritically and provokingly he confessed his Pride, or Covetousness: And the like we may infer when we see any man persevere in any gross wilful sin. And of such, God knows, there are such multitudes, as will give us instances more than enough, how wide a difference there is, between a *mere Confitent* and a *true Penitent*.

Some place Repentance only in external grief and sorrow for sin.

5. But in the next place, a *passionate regret* at Sin, a *grief* and *sadness* at its Memory, more speciously pretends to enter us into Gods roll of *Mourners*: Sorrow has (in vulgar acceptation) so engrost the whole notion of repentance, that men are apt to secure themselves, that the Wind of a penitential *Sigh* is so mighty, as will blow away the guilt of the most mountainous *Sin*: That if they have but *wept* a little upon their crimes, they have quite *extinguish'd* the wrath they kindled: But alas these are vain dreams, *God* who *delights not to grieve the children of men*, does not project for our sorrow, but our innocence; and would never have invited us to the one, but as an expedient to the other. 'Tis natural even to mere *Animals* to shun that by which they have smarted, and therefore sorrow for sin is a very proper means to avert our appetite from it: But if we have learnt the unhappy skill of separating the *effect* from the *cause*; if our Grief abate not our Love; if we can cast kind looks at our sins, even through those Tears wherewith our Eyes are glas'd, this will sure be as far from accomplishing our design, as God's: Leave us equally unpardon'd, as unreform'd.

Meer sorrow without amendment doth but aggravate our guilt,

6. Nay alas, such Sorrows as these will rather serve to *enhanse* than *expiate* our guilts; they are loud witnesses against us, that we know the malignity of those sins we commit; that we have poiz'd them, and find them as a *talent of lead* upon our Souls, and yet prefer them before Christs *light burthen*: That we have out-vied that perverse Election wherewith *Elihu* charges *Job*, and chosen *affliction* rather than *innocence*, *Job* 36. 21. and though we have felt the *gnawing of the Worm*, yet still resolve to cherish it, till it gains its woful Concomitant of *unquenchable fire*; and sure this resolvedness, this high *fortitude* in Sin, can with no reason be imagin'd a preparative to its remission, 'twill rather serve to list us among Satans *Martyrs*, than Gods *Penitents*.

and is of no avail towards our pardon.

7. And indeed if we examine the original of this kind of Sorrow, what is there that can with any face pretend to an acceptation? Alas! 'tis apparent there is no dislike to the sin; for the natural effect of that, would be the abandoning it. If I have fall'n into the mire, common reason directs me, not to sit down and cry that I am so defiled; but to cleanse and wash my self, and beware of such another misadventure. Now Gods enmity is purely with the sin: And if we think to contract a league with him; we must espouse his quarrel, hate what he hates: But in this case 'tis quite otherwise,

otherwiſe, we diſlike only the *conſequence*, not the *crime*; are diſſatisfied to ſee that what is ſo pleaſant, will not be ſafe: Deteſt thoſe temporal or eternal miſeries, which God has annext to it: Which is upon the matter to grieve not becauſe we are *guilty*, but God is *juſt*: And to avert only that part of the *evil*, of which he owns to be the author, that of *Puniſhment*; whilſt that of *Sin*, as our own creature, we dandle and careſs. And can we think it ſufficient to atone an incenſed Majeſty, that we love our own eaſe, while yet we love our ſin ſo much better? Is it a *vertue* to have ſome ineffective regrets to damnation, and ſuch a Vertue too, as ſhall ſerve to ballance all our vices? This were indeed a compendious courſe to block up Hell gates, and leave none a poſſibility of ever getting thither, but thoſe who ſcaled the wall and deſperately reſolved to poſſeſs themſelves of that place of *Torment*. But alas, they are other *fruits* of Repentance that muſt *deliver* us *from the wrath to come*: For though I deny not, that the *apprehenſion* of Danger is extremely both reaſonable and uſeful, yet 'tis only by way of *preparative*: 'Tis like the *Trumpet* that gives the *Alarm*, and ſets us to the *battel*, but it muſt not pretend to be like thoſe of *Gideon* that atchiev'd the whole victory. To ſee our *danger*, may occaſion, but does not cauſe, or neceſſarily infer an *eſcape*. I may madly leap into that pit which I ſee gaping to ſwallow me, and then my *foreſight* ſerves only to render me my own *murderer*. In ſhort, if that formidable aſpect of our Sins, make us run from them, it has done us the happieſt office; *pluckt us*, as S. *Jude* ſays, *out of the fire*: But if our love be ſo doting, as to counter-charm our fear, if we be ſo bewitcht with the *deceitfulneſs of ſin*, that we will have its Embraces, though we know them *deadly*; if we weep that we have ſinn'd and yet go on to ſin; our wilful *Guilt* will defile our *Tears*, but our tears will never cleanſe our guilt. We only aſſiſt in the judicature againſt our ſelves; and to Gods condemnation add our own: And what we call our Penitence, becomes a ſad Atteſtation of our Incorrigibleneſs.

8. And as this *mere Sorrow* will never avail, ſo neither will a *partial* and *imperfect reformation*, and that whether it be defective in reſpect of the *kind*, or of the *duration*: To the former we have ſpoken elſewhere, and ſhall not need to repeat: But of the latter there will need no leſs caution; men being apt to obtrude fallacies on themſelves in this as much as in the other. Every tranſient *gleam* of Piety is concluded to be that *flame* in which the Holy Ghoſt deſcended, and though it want the main circumſtance of reſting on them, yet ſerves to perſonate the Comforter. He that whilſt the ſoreneſs of his late pangs of *conſcience* remains, finds himſelf a little indiſpos'd for a new career in ſin, preſently concludes *repentance* hath had its perfect work in him, made that *change* and tranſmutation, which certainly denominates him a *new creature*, and pronounces his *vicious appetites extinct* and *mortified*: When alas they are but ſtrew'd over with a little *penitential Aſhes*, and will as ſoon as they meet with *combuſtible matter*, any apt temptation, *flame out* as fierce as ever; And God knows the event does too often actually atteſt this, after all the ablutions, and purification of their repentance, their next work is to diveſt themſelves of their white robe, and thoſe whom yeſterday you ſaw in the *laver*, to day you ſhall find wallowing in the *mire*: And as with far the more *guilt*, ſo ſometimes with much the greater *confidence*, for having been ſo waſht: Yet ſo ſtrongly are ſome mens fancies poſſeſt with their imaginary purity, that they are the laſt that take notice how the ſcene is chang'd: They comfort themſelves, that ſin and they have had ſome little *skirmiſhes*, though but preparatory to a cloſer *league*; that they had fixt good purpoſes, though there remain

Partial obedience is likewiſe defective and ſhort of true Repentance.

nothing

nothing visible but their violation; and so will call themselves Christs *Sheep*, though their notorious impurities witness them to belong only to that *herd* into which the *Legion* entred.

These mistakes are occasion'd by a wrong method of quieting peoples Consciences,

9. This is a deceit which one would think should immediately detect it self, but 'tis strange to see, how our *wishes* can prescribe to our *faith*; and what a more than omnipotent power our self-love has in reconciling contradictions: Yet I can scarce think this innate strength of corruption had been sufficient for the purpose, had it not had the auxiliary aid of some commodious doctrines. My present design is so far from controversial, that I am loth to point out any to which I must express unkindness: Yet upon this occasion, I shall refer it to consideration, whether that method which has been us'd to quiet *some* Consciences, be not very apt to stupefie *more*. When I see one who from his present reigning sins, regularly infers the illness of his state; that is yet by his Casuist diverted from that prospect, and bid look back to see, whether no part of his life afforded any Evidence of true Grace; and if he can but remember any such time, is warranted to make that his *Epocha*, from whence to date his *infallible assurance*; is told that that *immortal seed*, though it may be covered, yet cannot be choaked; but will most certainly spring up unto *Eternal life*: When I say, I see this easie remedy prescrib'd to his fears, 'twill be obvious for me to compound my self an *Antidote* from the same *Ingredients*: To fix my Eye upon some *mark* of Regeneration which at some time or other, I either have, or fancied to have had upon me, and with the stedfast beholding of that, as of the *brazen Serpent*, be fortified against all the *venome of my fiery lusts*: Cast in this one stick, and with it sweeten all the waters of *Marah*, secure me against all the bitter effects of my present guilts. How fatal an influence such discoursings as these are apt to have on practice, is too obvious both in the cause and effect: I need not examine the authority of that grand Principle on which they are founded; since if that were admitted, yet it will not justifie the before-mention'd Superstructure: For suppose it receiv'd as an infallible truth, that grace, if true, can never be lost: Yet 'tis by the confession of all, so easie to be deceiv'd in judging what is so, and our partialities to our selves are so likely to betray us to that deceit; that these *Corollaries* men deduce thence for their personal assurance, can never partake of the suppos'd infallibility of those premisses they derive from, and consequently are much too slight a *basis* for men to trust with so great a *weight*, as is that of their *present comfort* and *future state*.

and by (deferring or) putting off the work of Repentance till sickness or death.

10. Several other pernicious errors there are in the matter of *Repentance* which men fall into, shall I say, or rather aspire to; make it their ambition to be under their covert and patronage, and with extreme Violence to their *reason* as well as *religion*, climb up to those castles in the air, and there fortifie themselves impregnably against all the sacred Artillery of Divine threats. Their *false confidences* serve them as *feather-beds*, not only to sleep securely in, but to *dead all bullets* that are shot against them. But of all those deceitful *refuges*, there is none more treacherous, and yet more confidently and universally resorted to, than that of a *Repentance in reversion*, to commence no body knows when, some months or years hence, when this business is dispatcht, that lust satiated; or indeed to bear the same date (if not a later) with their last Will and Testament. This is that unhappy retreat to which *thousands fly* as the routed *Syrians* to *Aphek*, 1 *Kings* 20. 30. till they are entomb'd in that *wall*, whose shelter they solicited: How desperate the hazard of such procrastination is, hath been so convincingly

cingly demonſtrated by better Pens; that *trumpet* hath been blowed ſo loud by all our ſpiritual *watchmen*, that there remains nothing ſeaſonable, but to wonder whence men have got that *Lethe* which ſecures them their ſleep in ſpight of that *Alarm:* And certainly 'tis matter of the greateſt aſtoniſhment to obſerve the ſtupid, yet common boldneſs of men, who ſo fearleſly expoſe themſelves to this moſt formidable of perils; who yet in things of far leſs danger and lighter conſequence are ſo nicely timorous, that no ſecurity is thought enough, every the remoteſt danger to their outward concerns, excites their preſent vigilance to avert it: But here that order is moſt abſurdly inverted, and the *preſent imminent danger* is aſſign'd and put off to their *future care.* Let the *Phyſician* tell them he obſerves ſome Symptomes of a latent *Malady*, ſome aptitudes or firſt Cauſes of a *Diſeaſe*; what haſte is there made to meet that Enemy *in the frontiers*, before it advance too far? All Arts of prevention are us'd, and ſuch uneaſie *remedies* ſubmitted to, as perhaps out-bid the *pain* of the Diſeaſe. In like manner let a *Lawyer* tell them he has ſpied ſome defect in an *entail*, which may perhaps in the next age give ſome interruption to their deſign of having their houſes endure for ever, *Pſal.* 47. how ſolicitous are they to repair that *error*, and leave nothing to the mercy of a *Law-quirk?* And in both caſes thank the vigilant care of their informer that gave them notice of their danger: But let the *Divine* tell them he ſees their Souls languiſhing under the moſt mortal diſeaſes; that they have actually forfeited their *inheritance* in the land of the living, they can hear it unconcernedly; ſay, or at leaſt think thoſe cares are to be remitted to *Felix* his more convenient ſeaſon, that when their *Bodies* are as infirm as their *Souls*, then care may be taken for both together. That 'tis enough for their *ſpiritual* Life to commence, when the *natural* is expiring, and then to provide for *everlaſting* Habitations, when they are putting off their *Earthly* Tabernacle: As for the thanks they give their *Monitor*, 'tis generally the ſame that S. *Paul* received from the *Galatians*, to count him their *enemy for telling them the Truth*, *Gal.* 4. 16. but alas, he has no reaſon to reſent the injury, ſince 'tis but the ſame they offer to their neareſt and moſt intimate friend, that *Angel guardian* which God and Nature has placed within their own breaſts, I mean their *Conſcience:* Let that at any time whiſper the ſame admonition, and immediately they cry out as *Ahab* to *Eliah*, *Haſt thou found me O my Enemy?* All arts are us'd to convey themſelves out of its Reach, Buſineſs, or Company, or Drink, or any thing is ſolicited to come in to their reſcue, that in that throng they may deceive its purſuit, or at leaſt in that louder noiſe drown its voice; and is not this to look on it as their Enemy, while they ſhun it as a *Malefactor* does the *Officer?* Yet I appeal to the breaſts of thoſe, who lean upon the broken Reed of a late *Repentance*, whether this be not the caſe with them: Let me tell them whether they dare truſt themſelves alone with their *Conſcience*, give it opportunity of ſpeaking freely to them, of laying before them the mad adventure they make of their precious *Souls*; which they do not only expoſe to as many hazards of a *ſwift damnation*, as there are accidents which may ſurpriſe their *bodies* with a *ſudden death*; but do beſides by this reſiſtance repel and quench that *Spirit*, without which they can never hope to effect that ſo neceſſary, ſo difficult a *work*; nay, I may, I fear, ask of them, whether they have not ſo often ſhunned theſe parleys, that their *Conſciences* like an *abus'd Friend*, has at laſt given them over, ceaſt to purſue them with more of thoſe unwelcome importunities; and by its ſilence left them ſecur'd from all noiſe which may diſturb that treacherous ſleep into which

they

they have lulled themselves. To those who are thus given up to the *spirit of slumber*, I cannot hope to speak loud enough to rouze them; but to those that are but of the former rank, that have not yet so prosper'd in their unkind design against themselves, as quite to have alienated their bosom friend, that are yet within the reach of those *amica verbera*, the stripes and reproofs of their own Conscience; to such I would address with this most affectionate *petition*, that they would not seek to remove themselves from that *wholsom discipline*; that they would not fly that *Chirurgeon* whose *Lancet* threatens none but the *imposthumated parts*; but rather chuse to be shewed the formidableness of their Danger, than by a blind embracing it, to perish in it. And if they have but any general confus'd inclinations to this so reasonable a request, I shall then put on more solemnity, assume to come as an *Envoy* from those dreaded Consciences of theirs, to *mediate* an enterview, to propose the fixing some time of parley, and bespeak their *patience* to hear it out: And let them but grant this, let them but dare to do so much in order to their own safety, and I can scarce think it possible they should after retain that daring, which only tends to their ruine. In a word, let men seriously and attentively listen to that *voice* within them, and they will certainly need no other *medium*, to convince them either of the error or danger of thus procrastinating their *Repentance*, which themselves acknowledge must not upon their utmost peril be finally omitted, and yet nothing but an immediate dispatch can secure it shall not.

True Repentance must be universal, lasting, present and undelay'd.

11. 'Twill be needless to descend to a particular view of more of these deceits, they will easily be detected by this one *general Rule*, that whatsoever falls short of a present, universal, permanent Change, falls as much short of *Repentance*. All the pretences that are made upon any other score are but as the Garments of the *elder brother*, put upon the back of the *younger*, which though they might delude a blind *Isaac*, will never be able to deceive an all-seeing *God*. All that remains is to offer to the Readers consideration, how nearly he is concern'd to guard himself against all delusions in this so important an affair. It was an ancient *Stratagem* of War to poison the Waters in an Enemies Camp, that so they may drink their own deaths: But *Satan* has here far out-vied that *Policy*. Were but our Nourishment infected, we had still a recourse left us to Medicine; but here he has envenom'd our very Physick, and what *cure* remains for those whose very *remedies* are their *disease?* When that Bath which was design'd to cleanse us, is it self polluted, we may well cry out as *Dionysius* of the corrupted River of *Alexandria*, ποῖον γένοιτο ἂν πάντα καθαιρον τῶ ὕδατι ὕδωρ ἄλλο καθάρσιον; what Flood shall cleanse these Waters? Where can we be secure, when our *Repentance* (which the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. supposes the Means of disentangling us) is it self become our Snare? This as it loudly proclaims our *danger*, so surely in all reason it should awake our *care*, teach us not to suffer our selves to be abus'd with delusive appearances and shadows of *Repentance*, lest we finally find that *Ixion-like* we have embraced a Cloud. What an amazing defeat will it be to him, who presumes his Tears have blotted out the *hand-writing* against him, to find the full bill brought in at the great Assize, and those he call'd his *penitential sorrows* here, to prove but the Prologue to that *Tragedy* which ends in *weeping and gnashing of teeth!* And therefore let every one timely provide against that fatal surprize, use this excellent receipt, not as a *Cosmetick* only to beautifie the face, give him some fair appearance to himself, but as *Medicine* to restore health; reduce him to such an *Athletick* vigorous Habit, as may evidence it self in all *vital* Actions, which will prove the best evidences in our

our laſt trial, where the inquiſition will not be ſo much upon our Mouths or Eyes, as upon our Hands: Not how many *confeſſions* we have made, or how many *tears* ſhed, but what *acts* of Vertue we have ſubſtituted in the room of our Vices: Whether we have broken off our ſins by *righteouſneſs*, and our Iniquities by *ſhewing mercy to the Poor*; and without this 'tis infallibly certain, our Chriſtianity will be as ineffectual to our *Bliſs*, as it is to our *Piety*: If we will not permit it here to bring us to the *obedience* of Servants, it ſhall never inſtate us hereafter in the *inheritance* of Sons.

CHAP. VIII.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Miſtakes concerning Almighty God, and the methods of his Providence.

1. TO theſe Miſtakes of our ſelves and intereſts, we have added others alſo concerning God, which are no leſs deſtructive to Chriſtian Practice, for as the *right knowledge of God is by our Saviour, Joh.* 17. 3. put as the Epitome and ſumm of all that leads to *bliſs*, ſo our miſpriſions and miſapprehenſions of him, are no leſs remarkable for the contrary effects; nor can we ſuppoſe it otherwiſe, when we remember that this is the grand work and *baſis* of all Religion, and therefore if this *foundation* be deceitfully laid, the *ſuperſtructure* muſt neceſſarily ſink and periſh: And in this ſence 'tis poſſible for us at once to build on the *Rock* and the *Sand* too; we may fix our faith intentionally on God, and yet by abſurd notions and unwarranted conceits of him, defeat in the particulars what we eſtabliſh'd in the groſs; repreſent him ſo utterly diſtant from what he is, that under that diſguiſe he will not much appear, either an Encourager or Rewarder of our *Piety*, and then we may gueſs how 'tis likely to flouriſh ſince the Apoſtle gives it as a *Fundamental Axiom*, Heb. 11. 6. That *he who comes to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them which diligently ſeek him.* *Miſtakes concerning God are dangerous.*

2. Of theſe miſtakes concerning God, there are divers; many more than the deſign'd brevity of this diſcourſe will admit me to examine. I ſhall only mention *three*, thoſe are, Firſt, concerning his *Decrees*, Secondly, his *Attributes*, Thirdly, his *Providence*. *Three inſtances of theſe miſtakes.*

3. By his *Decrees*, I mean not thoſe ſtanding *rules* which he has in his Word ſet forth as the *meaſures* by which he will diſtribute rewards and puniſhments; but thoſe ſecret *purpoſes of his Will*, which he neither commands us to ſearch after, nor will permit us to know. That there are many Miſtakes concerning theſe, the numberleſs Diſputes that have been rais'd about them will ſufficiently atteſt, it being impoſſible for two Contradictory Opinions to be both *true*, though in things of this abſtruſe nature 'tis very poſſible both may be *falſe*. 'Tis not my purpoſe to wade into thoſe bottomleſs controverſies which like a Gulph have ſwallowed up ſo much time and induſtry of learned men: I ſhall only in *general* commend it to the Readers conſideration, whether it be probable, or indeed poſſible for thoſe Opinions to be *true* which infer *falſhood* in God? And then let the ſecond enquiry be, whether that be not too evidently the reſult of thoſe diſcourſes which ſet an Oppoſition between his *revealed* and his *ſecret* Will, his commands and his Decrees, making the one a blind for the better execution of the other? as if all the Tranſportation and Zeal he expreſſes *for* us, all the paſſionate enamouring invitations he makes *to* us, were only *The firſt inſtance of miſtake is concerning Gods Decrees, which they oft oppoſe to his reveal'd Will;*

to sport himself with our credulity: Like the divertisement of those Men, who court them for Wives, whom they would abhor to marry: Nay, as if all the protestations and most solemn oaths of God, were design'd but to advance the delusion, and raise expectations, merely to defeat them. This is such a severe sort of *Irony*, as we would all think not only unkind but unjust in a man; and 'tis not possible that God, who appeals to us concerning the equality of his ways, should fall short of the strictest measures among us, or exemplifie to us an unsincerity he forbids us to follow.

whereby they have an evil influence on mens lives and practices,

4. How very inauspicious influence such *doctrines* are apt to have on *practice* is too visible, for since 'tis as well the instinct as duty of our nature to aspire to an assimilation with God, even that most laudable and generous ambition shall by this means become our snare; for when *God* shall be thus misrepresented to us, drawn out by the black Lines not only of *severity*, but *deceit*, rendred a Falsifier of his *Word*, nay *Oath*; 'twill give not only temptation but warrant to the like Practices: We shall easily swallow up all the particular commands of God, in that fundamental one of being like him; as we are taught himself has done both his commands and promises in his hidden Decrees. This is so natural a piece of *Logick*, that 'tis very unsafe men should be trusted with those *premisses* whence 'tis deriv'd. And though we are not over-apt to transcribe that Copy God does really set us, yet this spurious one will not miss to be taken out: That pravity of our nature which hinders in the one, exciting and spurring us on in the other. This is a way to reconcile our Vices with our reputation, and sin *cum Privilegio*; and there is little doubt of mens aptness to use that advantage; we see it in lower instances. The *Vices* of a Prince draw sholes of followers, when his *virtue* leaves him the more eminent, because single, and renders him rather revered than imitated: And certainly 'twas none of the Devils slightest *stratagems* on the *Gentile* world, to give them *such Gods* as might exemplifie to them all those *odious crimes*, wherein he desir'd to immerse them. Whether this may not be a *branch* of the same Illusion, I wish the Propugners of this doctrine would seriously consider.

and are a great hindrance to our progress in holiness.

5. And as several *ills* are hereby countenanc'd and authoriz'd, so is all *virtue* in general discouraged and disheartened; this benums us in our Christian course, substracts that spirit and vigour, which should carry us through the weary stages of duty: Indeed it cuts the very *sinews* of Industry, baffles and makes ridiculous all *purposes* of Labour; for what should invite a man to strive for that, from which he knows he is either irreversibly precluded, or else so infallibly ascertain'd of, that his negligence cannot defeat him? These are such *extremes* as afford no *middle*, wherein the virtue of industry may exist, hope being equally out-dated by the desperateness or unnecessariness of an undertaking: And how necessary hope is to excite endeavour we may learn of S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 5. where he presses his *Corinthians* to the constancy of Christian Practice upon this ground, that their *labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* But according to some mens doctrine, 'tis scarce possible for a man to know whether his labour be in vain or no; since the effect of it depends not upon the revealed *promise*, but secret *purpose* of God, and who knows whether there may not lie some *Dormant Decrees* against him, which when he thinks he has run his *race*, shall yet defeat him of his *Crown.* Whether a reward thus stated will much animate mens diligence, I may leave every man to judge by the like circumstances in their secular concerns; and if they find they would there damp their courage, dispirit and dishearten them from attempting, there will be sure more reason to conclude it in these *spiritual* Affairs, wherein our industry is commonly much less indefatigable.

6. But

6. But I ſhall not farther inſiſt on the ill conſequences of particular miſtakes; there is one *fundamental error*, which if it could be cured, would ſuperſede all the reſt; I mean our bold folly in *medling with Gods Decrees*, which we call hidden, and yet ridiculouſly confute that Epithet by pretending to know them. This is ſo much an inſolence as forfeits the compariſon, which might belong to it as an error; we ſee *ſecular States* jealouſly reſerve their *private Counſels*; and ſhall we think God ſo ſcrutable, our ſelves ſo penetrating, that none of his ſecrets can eſcape us? Or if we think him, as indeed he is, *unfathomable*, why do we thus madly attempt what we confeſs *impoſſible*? Eſpecially ſince we ſhall not only loſe the thing we ſo vainly purſue, but others which we might elſe enjoy. 'Tis as if a man ſhould be ſo tranſported with a buſie earneſtneſs of knowing his Princes *Secrets*, as quite to forget his *Laws*, and incur capital puniſhment. God has given us *rules of life*, which upon the ſevereſt penalties he requires us to ſtudy and practiſe; and we divert from theſe, and make it our buſineſs to trace his *Counſels*. We are gazing at the *Stars* to read our deſtiny, and look not to our *feet*; and by that negligence experiment the worſt fate they could have portended: For I think we may ſay our wild *Fancies* about Gods Decrees, have in event reprobated more than thoſe *Decrees*, upon which they are ſo willing to charge their ruine, and have bid fair to the damning of many, whom thoſe left ſalvable. And indeed 'tis to be expected from Divine Juſtice, that ſuch bold Inquiſitors ſhould find nothing but their own Deſtruction. That Ark which devoutly reverenced brought *bleſſings*, when curiouſly pried into diffus'd *Peſtilence* and *Death*, 1 *Sam.* 6. 19. Nay the very *Poets* will tell us, that if we will have *Prometheus* his Fire, we muſt take *Pandora's* Box alſo: And ſure Induſtry cannot be worſe laid out than thus to fetch home *Plagues*, and while ſo much of it runs waſte to ſuch unhappy purpoſes, 'tis no wonder if we want for better; forget our *calling* by contemplating our *predeſtination*; and let the Opinion of our *fate* be at once the Encouragement and excuſe of our *ſloth*, than which nothing can more evacuate the purpoſe and deſign of our Chriſtianity, which Divines have truly defin'd to be not a *contemplative* but *active* Science.

Dangerous to pry too curiouſly into Gods Decrees, which are ſecret and unſearchable.

7. To the ſame unhappy Effect concur our Miſtakes of *Gods Attributes*, if I may call them Miſtakes, which ſeem to be rather wilful Neſcience, they being ſo delineated to us both in his Word and his Providences, that 'tis not want of light, but winking againſt it that muſt leave us ignorant. What the *ſpeculative errors* are in this matter concerns not my preſent deſign to examine: But there ſeem to be ſome Miſperſwaſions concerning the *Divine Attributes*, which do remarkably tend in their conſequence and effect, to the corrupting *mens manners*; nay, look as if they were deſign'd, and affectedly choſen for that purpoſe; I mean, eſpecially thoſe concerning his *Juſtice* and *Mercy*, which being the *Attributes* in which we have the moſt immediate Concern, the Errors in them are the more noxious and deſtructive. Of this ſort is that narrow ſcanty notion too many have of *Gods Juſtice*, which we meaſure not by *him* but *our ſelves*, and therefore proportion it not according to his *infinity*, but our own *concerns*. That is an Attribute from which we promiſe to our ſelves no advantage, and therefore we are willing to contract and ſhrink it up, make it ſerve only as a *Cypher* to advance *mercy*, but are unwilling to underſtand it in its proper Extent; think it a *word of form* put in to complete the greatneſs of Gods Stile, rather than any *intrinſick part of his nature*, which he muſt deny himſelf to put off.

The ſecond miſtake is concerning Gods Attributes, and concerning his Juſtice.

3. Mistakes concerning Gods mercy and our unequal apprehensions thereof.

8. Thus do we sacrilegiously steal from God a part of his Being, and while other Sacriledges invade only his *patrimony*, this commits a riot upon his very *nature*; yet as if we meant the Proverb should indemnifie us, and *Exchange* extinguish the *Robbery*, we add to another attribute what we have defaulkt from this, and amplifie and extend his *Mercy*, as much as we confine and limit his *Justice*; that is the one infinite Ocean, wherein not only we, but himself must be swallowed up. We will think of him under no other notion, nor allow him to be any other thing, but what shall be in subserviency to this: We will have him Powerful to *relieve* our Distresses, but not to *revenge* our Crimes; Wise to *defeat* the machinations of our Enemies, but not to *circumvent* our own indirect or impious Policies; All-seeing to *behold* our Wants and Griefs, but not to *discern* our closer Guilts; True to *perform* his Promises, but not his Threats. In short, we model all that is in God to our own wishes; and instead of believing him what he is, fancy him what we would have him. Like *Micha*, *Judg.* 17. 5. *making us a God* for our own peculiar use, and forming the Deity we mean to worship. A strange bold Inversion, for Creatures thus to fashion their Creator, put their own stamp or impress upon him, and shape him to their Fancies. And indeed 'tis nothing but *Fancy* that has to do in this Attempt, and accordingly it must vanish as the *operations* of that illusive Faculty use to do. We may represent God to our selves as we please, but that has no more real *influence* on him, than a *deforming Optick-glass* has on the *Object* it disguises, he is still *the same* amidst all our wild conceits of him, and will always make good the *title*, by which he delivered himself to *Moses*, *Exod.* 3. 14. *I am that I am.* All that is in him is equally immense and infinite, his *mercy* need not invade his *justice* to gain it self a larger field of action, which is already (as the *Psalmist* speaks) *over all his works*; neither his *justice* encroach upon his *mercy*, that having also a Province wide enough; all impenitent sinners being within its Verge, and God knows how much soever we straiten it in our *opinions*, we do indeed too much extend it in its *real force*, by rendring our selves the proper objects of it. In short, God who is the author of *order* and peace, cannot be suppos'd to be in *confusion* within himself; the divine Attributes are not in *strife*, but perfect *harmony*; 'tis we only that have rais'd this more than *Gigantick war*, not only *against* Heaven, but *in* it. The several *Luminaries* pursue the regular motions of the *Spheres*; but we confound at once the *Laws* of their Creation, and their *Author* too, strive to eclipse and darken *the father of light*. But if the removing of an earthly Land-mark be a crime punishable both by God and man, what Thunder-bolts belong to those who thus attempt to set new Boundaries to Heaven, to limit and measure out even the *divine Nature*, by the proportions of their own *Fancies*, and indeed such temerity as this, is too like to confute it self, and feel that Justice it will not believe; yet as great and daring a crime as it is, I fear there are few that can totally acquit themselves of it: For though all disavow it, yet he that shall narrowly search his own heart, will scarce find it clear from all degrees of it: We are all apt to cherish a *flattering hope*, that God is not so severe as he is represented, or that if in respect of his Justice he be a *consuming power*, yet that Mercy will be sure to snatch us out of the *burning*; like the Angels to *Lot*, assist our Escapes, and provide us a *Zoar, that our Souls may live*: And this Hope though founded only in our *wishes*, is very apt to slide into our *faith*, and make us believe what we would have: By which means this becomes a kind of *Epidemick* Heresie, the most frequent and common misperswasion that occurs concerning the divine Attributes.

9. It

9. It would be a work more long than uſeful to recite the ſeveral errors that have ſprung from this one. That of *Origen*, that *the Devils ſhould finally be ſaved*, is a noted and pregnant Inſtance, which could be deriv'd from nothing but this unequal apprehenſion of Gods Juſtice and Mercy: And beſides all other ancient, we have many branches of a later growth, that ſpring from the ſame root, a ſet of plauſible falſities, which would quench the *unquenchable Fire*, and kill the never *dying Worm*; I mean thoſe allaying ſoftning deſcriptions ſome of this age have made of Hell, ſome changing the *kind*, others abating the *intenſeneſs*, or at leaſt the *duration* of thoſe Torments, each ſubſtracting ſo much from this *Tophet*, that they have left *Atheiſm* an eaſie task to take away the reſt: And may give ſuſpicion they mean to viſit that place, which they are ſo induſtrious to make eaſie.

Which hath given occaſion to ſeveral dangerous errors in Religion, and particularly about the Nature and Duration of Hell Torments;

10. But whatever they do *themſelves*, 'tis ſure this is the way to ſend *others* thither, to take off their fears of it, to make them think it not ſo dreadful a place as they once ſuppos'd, and conſequently leſs careful to decline the ways that lead to it. 'Tis indeed too obvious that ſuch perſwaſions do mightily impugn Chriſtian Practice, and embolden men in ſin: And God knows we need no ſuch encouragement; the more general fallacious hopes of Mercy being too ſufficient for that purpoſe without theſe ſupernumerary deceits: But between the one and the other, *Libertiniſm* is like to out-grow all reſtraints, and the opinion of *Gods goodneſs* inſtead of *leading men to repentance*, will ſlacken thoſe reins wherewith our brutiſh Nature ſhould be bridled and reſtrain'd, and we thus left unto the ſway of luſt and paſſion, muſt run head-long upon ruine, *as the horſe ruſheth into the Battel.* For alas, we are not ſo *generous* as to do well for Virtues-ſake, nay nor ſo *provident* as to do it for Reward; 'tis our fear that is the moſt prevalent incentive, and accordingly we find religion generally makes her firſt impreſſions there. They are *the terrors of the Lord* that do moſt uſually, and moſt effectually *perſwade men*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. our Hearts muſt be pricked, and at thoſe Orifices piety enters. Now when all theſe terrors ſhall be ſuperſeded by the opinion of an overwhelming mercy, when *Hell* ſhall either be annihilated, or ſuppos'd ſo to annihilate us, that we ſhall loſe our paſſiveneſs with our being, and be as uncapable of ſuffering, as even *Heaven* it ſelf can make us, what will be left to engage us to *virtue*, or deter us from *vice*? Alas, do we not often ſee a daring Luſt bid *battel* to all the artillery of Heaven, meet *God* in his loudeſt Thunder, and venture on *damnation* in its dreadfulleſt form? And can we think it will be more modeſt, when it ſhall be told that they are only edgeleſs weapons it hath to encounter? That Gods Thunder amidſt all its noiſe carries no *bolt*? And that the Flames of the bottomleſs pit, are but a *painted fire*, that at a diſtance may fright, but not hurt us, or at leaſt ſo hurt us, that we ſhall not feel it? When thoſe rubs which fear interpos'd are thus removed, there is nothing to ſtay the courſe of headlong riot, but precipitiouſly it will on, where ever *ſtrong deſire* ſhall drive, or *flattering luſt* allure: He that loved his ſin, even when it threatned him *ruine*, ſerv'd it aſſiduouſly, when it promiſed no other wages than *death*, *Rom.* 6. 23. how will he hug this *viper* when he thinks 'tis ſtingleſs, and give up his ear to be bored by that *Maſter*, which affords him preſent pleaſures without future ſtripes? We ſee even in Civil matters the *preſumption* of Impunity is the great *nurſe* of Diſorders, and if it were not for the *coercive* power of Laws we ſhould ſoon ſee how little the *directive* would ſignifie; and doubtleſs 'tis the ſame in ſpiritual or rather worſe, by how much we are more bent upon the break-

which is apt to abate the Fear and Terror thereof in the minds of bad men,

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ing of Gods Laws than mens, and consequently will be the more apprehensive of any Encouragement.

and encouragth them to sin through hopes of Impunity.

11. Of the truth hereof our experience gives too sad proof, none rushing so boldly upon Gods *justice*, as those who have most fortified themselves against the *dread* of it, as if they meant their *practice* should experiment the truth of their *speculation*, and make the utmost trial whether God can be provok'd or no. Indeed men use *mercy* as amaz'd Passengers sometimes do a *plank* in a shipwrack, lay so much weight upon it, as sinks both it and themselves; so perishing by too great a confidence of their rescue, and finding a *Gulph* where they expected an *Ark*: Not that I suppose Mercy unable to support the weight of all the *Persons*, nay, and of all the *sins* in the world, which have not the one ponderous *adherent* of Impenitence superadded; but that is a burthen which even the divine *Clemency* sinks under, refuses to plead such a cause, and refers it to *Justice* as its proper Court: And therefore to sin on, in hope of mercy, is to undermine our selves, and commit a folly as absurd as ruinous; I wish I could say 'twere not also as frequent: But God knows 'tis every where too apparent; men openly avow it, so that 'tis become the vulgar answer to every convicting Reproof, that *God is merciful*: And surely they that observe the growth of vice, since our new descriptions of Hell came abroad, will have cause to think the one has had no small influence on the other, and that while some have made it borrow the uneasiness of our humane state to make up its torments; they have taken care it should be just, and lend us back sins of a greater magnitude. This miserable traffick have these Factors setled, between the present world and the infernal region, that Hell should have Earths *pains*, and Earth Hells *wickedness*; the later alas we are too fully possest of, which is like to send too many souls to discover the deceit of the other. In fine, our groundless confidences of mercy, and those other *Chimæra*'s we forge out of that, are certainly the most frequent and dangerous underminers of Christian practice: These like the *Sun* give heat and vigour to those inordinate lusts which a just *fear of vengeance* would as a winters frost nip, and destroy: And till we lay by these easie slight thoughts of God, and consider him in those more awful attributes which exact our reverence, his *mercy* will only serve to ripen us for his judgment; that smooth and gentle property in God, which to all who abuse it not is indeed the *oil of gladness*, will thus perverted acquire the more fatal quality of Oil, serve only to intend our *flames*, and remove us as far from the *rewards* of Piety, as our bold *fancies* have done from the *practice*.

Mistakes concerning the Providence of God, and first, In those that deny a Providence;

12. A third sort of mistakes there are by which Piety is obstructed, and those are such as concern *Gods providence*, about which the world has long since had many disputes; some entirely denying it, as presuming God so wholly taken up with the contemplation and enjoyment of his own felicity, that he is utterly inconsiderate of that of his creatures, and an unconcern'd *spectator* of humane affairs; others limiting and restraining it to those things only which themselves were pleas'd to think worthy of the divine inspection and conduct: But these questions have been more bandied among *Philosophers* than *Christians*, and therefore are beyond our present enquiry. Yet give me leave by the way to express my fears, that these errors have yet some secret rooting in too many hearts; that there are many who rather formally *say*, than cordially *believe*, that God governs the World, and disposes as well of *humane* as *divine* things; a suspicion that is rendred too probable by those indirect arts men use, to possess themselves of secular advantages; for did they seriously think, that all those things

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are in Gods hands, from whence they are neither ſtrong nor cunning enough, either to wreſt or pilfer them, 'tis ſcarce imaginable they ſhould attempt ſuch painful impoſſibilities, diſquiet themſelves in vain, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, and which is worſe, forfeit all title to them as Gods gifts, by thus aſſuming to make them their own. But this is a diſquiſition I muſt leave every man to make in his own heart; only let me ſay, that he that has there any doubt of Gods univerſal or particular providence, has alſo in it the root of all *unchriſtian Sins*, of Diſtruſt, Solicitude, and Fraud: There being nothing that can effectually ſuperſede our own carkings and contrivances for our ſelves, but the aſſurance that God cares for us. Men being ſtill apt to ſcramble, where there is none from whom they expect an orderly and ſufficient diſtribution, and therefore this error where-ever it is found, may well be reckon'd among the impeders of Chriſtian duty.

2. *In ſuch as go about to fathom the depths of it:*

13. But beſides thoſe who thus doubt of Providence, there are others liable to great miſtakes, I mean thoſe who to their *juſt belief* of Gods Providence, ſuperadd a *groundleſs confidence* of their own skill in fathoming it; that are not content to know it in its *product* and event, but pretend to diſcern it in its moſt ſecret *deſignments* and purpoſes; and do not ſo much *reverſe* Gods diſpenſations, as *interpret* them. I do not here mean to condemn all *particular applications* of providential Events, which are ſometimes ſo extraordinary and remarkable, that they are their own *expoſitors*, and point out the *conſtruction* we are to make: And an humble advertence unto ſuch, is not only innocent but neceſſary: But when men ſhall attempt to read every line in *Gods hand*, to make their own inference from every efflux of Providence; theſe pretenders to *divine Palmiſtry*, ſeem to differ only thus much from thoſe who make a trade of the *natural*, that they cheat *themſelves* as well as *others*.

3. *In others that would have a hand in the execution of it.*

14. Yet there want not ſome who have gone yet farther, and think not only to *underſtand* Providence, but *aſſiſt* it: Not only trace it in all its intricate windings, and concealed *intendments*, but help it in the execution, and give birth to its *conceptions*: Of this ſort eſpecially are thoſe, who having poſſeſt their brains with ſome conjectural expoſitions of obſcure prophecies, will adminiſter to providence, and call out thoſe events they expect: And as if they were conſcious that God would not make good their dreams, endeavour to do it themſelves. This age has afforded too many inſtances of this, when the *fulfilling of Prophecies* has by ſome been made the ſolemn ſummons to *rebellion and bloud*: And in order to the *hating and deſtroying of the whore*, *Rev.* 17. 1. men have been animated to hate and deſtroy all who were not infected with their own Frenzy. This we know has been call'd the *helping of the Lord againſt the mighty*, and ſomething more than votive Curſes awarded to thoſe who refus'd to aſſiſt. Thus have they firſt wildly miſtaken, and then no leſs wildly out-run God's deſigns: As if like *Baal*, *Judg.* 6. he were unable to plead for himſelf, to vindicate his own cauſe, or effect his purpoſes without their help: And having reſolved what he ſhall do, obtrude themſelves upon him as his inſtruments; how repugnant ſuch *anticipations* of Providence are to the *intereſts* of Chriſtianity is too apparent from the many *deteſtable effects* they have produc'd.

Gods favour not to be concluded either way from the Events of Providence.

15. But ſetting aſide theſe, let us return to thoſe we ſpake of before; who preſuming to expound providential Events, make them the *Criterion* by which to judge both of *perſons* and of *cauſes*, concluding the one loved or hated, the other approved or diſallowed by God, according to their *proſperous* or *adverſe* Succeſs. The firſt of theſe was by our Saviour exploded, as an undue way of proceſs in the *Jews*, in the caſe of the *Galileans*,

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and before him *Solomon* had given it as a Maxim, that *no man could know love or hatred by all that is before him, Eccl.* 9. 1. And if under the *Jewish Oeconomy*, where temporal Blessings made up so great a part of their Promises, it was so; much more is it under the *Gospel*, whose frame and composure is quite distant; which instead of proposing secular prosperities to its *proselytes*, assures them the contrary; sets up the Cross as the Standard under which they are to fight, and affords no temporal Hopes, but with an allaying *proviso* of Persecutions and afflictions; nay, the Apostle to the *Hebrews* goes farther, makes them not only *incident* but *necessary* to Christians, the badge and cognizance of Sonship, whilst the *no chastening* is the fatallest Sign, *a token of bastardy* and abdication, *Heb.* 12. 7, 8. And doubtless the experience of every Christian asserts the doctrine; we are all apt with the *Prodigal* to forsake our fathers house, and as long as we can have the riot and not the wants, shall never think of returning; we must be famisht into consideration, and our *husks* alone will send us home to the *fatted Calf*. And can there be a greater indulgence in God, than thus to make our Iniquity our Punishment, that it may not be our Ruine? To embitter those sensualities whose lusciousness serves to intoxicate us, and to clip those wings which he sees carry us from him? Stories tell us that the *Trojan* Wives after the *destruction* of their Country, being wearied with their restless vagrant life, necessitated their Husbands to a *settlement* by *burning* their Ships. And the same kind stratagem God has upon us: He sees that our worldly accessions do rather enlarge than fill our appetites, and carry us on to farther pursuits, and by drawing us still more from him the Center of rest, expose us to endless wandrings, and then what can be kinder than to rescue us from such a condition, that Curse of *Cain*, to be a *fugitive and a vagabond in the earth:* To deprive us of our treacherous prosperities, and fire those Ships wherein we are preparing like *Jonah*, to *flee from the presence of the Lord*; so by a happy necessity forcing us to fix our selves on him. And this is the worst God designs us in every adversity: And did we mean but as well to our selves, we should not miss of receiving the happiest Effects, even that *peaceable fruit of righteousness* the Apostle speaks of, *Heb.* 12. This holy men so well understood, that we find them dread nothing so much as an uninterrupted prosperity; they, like the *Muscovite* Women, grew jealous of Gods love when he forbare to strike; upon which score it is, that in the Ancient Fathers, there are so many solemn petitions for stripes; such importunate solicitations for the *medicinal corrections*, wherein they judg'd both Gods *kindness* and their own *safety* to consist.

We must not judge of his love, by worldly prosperity;

16. And then how perverse, how preposterous are our measures, when we conclude quite the other way, estimate *Gods love* only from *outward successes*, and think he is never angry but when he smites: A Persuasion, which as it is very false in its *grounds*, so very pernicious in its *effects*, and creates hopes and fears, as fallacious as it self. For first, if we apply it to our selves, it produces mischiefs proportionable to the divers states under which we are. If a man be *full* and *prosperous*, it makes him *proud* and *secure*, for when he has not only the possession of those things the World values, but takes them as an attestation of Gods peculiar kindness and approbation, what should make him either consider or reform his guilts? If he have sanctity enough to possess him of Gods favour, and all these profitable effects of it, he will not easily be perswaded he needs more: And any man that shall tell him he does, shall be heard with the same indignation wherewith *Crœsus* entertain'd *Solon*, when he found him question that happiness, which he expected he should have *admir'd*. Prosperity is in it self an emboldening thing, but

but when backt by this Opinion of it, grows into all inſolence till at laſt it even recoil in the face of the Donor, and *dare* God by all thoſe enormous riots, to which it *enables Men.*

17. On the other ſide, this opinion preſents a leſs *merry*, but not leſs *dangerous* Temptation to thoſe in adverſity; for when they ſhall look on *themſelves* only as the *Anvil* for Gods ſtrokes, they will be too apt to complete the *parallel* by anſwering it in *hardneſs* and inflexibility; have the ἀντίτυπον νῦν, as the Father calls it, which reverberates the blow on him that gave it. Perſevering wickedneſs is ſo naturally the iſſue of Deſperation, that we find the *Jews* take up the one merely to countenance the other, pretend *hopeleſneſs* to avoid *reformation*: Thus we find it, *Ezek.* 33. 10. *Our iniquities are upon us, and we pine away in them, how ſhould we live?* And again more plainly, *Jer.* 18. 12. *There is no hope*, and then the inference is ready, *Let us walk every one in his own ways.* Endeavour is the child of hope, and we attempt not to attone one whom we conclude implacable: So that Wrath may *conſume*, but will never *melt* us; 'tis Love only that has that *ſoftning*, diſſolving Power, and unleſs we diſcern a mixture of that in Gods *inflictions*, they will never render us *malleable* to his *impreſſions.* We kiſs a Fathers hand and rod, when an Executioners ſtroke we ſuffer rather than bear. S. *John* tells us *we love God becauſe he loved us*, 1 *John* 4. 19. I wiſh all men would make good the Inference; but 'tis ſure they are too apt to do it in the reverſe, and will hate if they apprehend themſelves hated; a ſtate which at once exemplifies, and anticipates the worſt part of *Hell* to us, yet very incident to thoſe who interpret every ſtroke of God's, as the effect of enmity and utter averſion. This is to do that to our ſelves which the *Devils* ſo deprecate from Chriſt, to *torment us before our time*, it being peculiar to the vengeance of the other World to be merely punitive, that here being rather *diſcipline* than *vengeance*, deſign'd to reduce, not deſtroy us: And indeed beſides the *pain of ſenſe* which this Error creates, it does (to perfect the Hell) give that *of loſs* alſo; deprives us of one of the great Evangelical *felicities*, that of *rejoycing in Tribulations*, which our Saviour thought ſo conſiderable, as to inſert amongſt his Beatitudes: And his Apoſtles frequently mention it triumphantly as the great *priviledge* and *prerogative* of a Chriſtian. For if all adverſe ſucceſſes be a note of Gods diſfavour, there will be no place for joy even in the moſt pious ſufferings. S. *Stephens* raviſhing proſpect will be intercepted, and a *Martyrs* death be as uncomfortable as a *Malefactors.* But if theſe were the only ſufferings to which joy were annext, there would be but too few concern'd in the deprivation; thoſe wherein we are more univerſally intereſſed, are thoſe Chaſtiſements of God which our Guilts provoke; which though in reſpect of their *cauſe* they are Matters of the greateſt ſadneſs, yet in regard of their ſignificancy and *effect*, they are Grounds of comfort; they ſignifie that God (however diſpleas'd) yet has not abandoned the care of us; thinks us worth his *correction*, and deſigns our *reducement*: And the effect will (if not obſtructed by us) be anſwerable to that deſign: Our *Chaſtening* here reſcues us from the *ſins*, and conſequently the *condemnation of the world*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. and this is ſure no ſlight motive of rejoycing; and we are very unjuſt to God and our ſelves, if we will exchange it for the ſullen murmurs of a deſperate incorrigibleneſs.

nor of his hatred, by outward croſſes and affliction.

18. And as this perſwaſion is thus *pernicious* in reflection on *our ſelves*, ſo neither is it more *innocent* when applied to *others*; for firſt, if we look on the men that proſper in the world, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 73. 12. we

Not to envy any man for his proſperous eſtate;

we shall too often find them answer the *character*, he gives them in the former part of the *Psalm*, and when from their temporal affluence we shall conclude Gods favour to them, 'twill be hard resisting the *temptation* which (without that Argument) the *Psalmist* was under, of thinking it *vain to cleanse our hearts or wash our hands in innocency*. Nay, we shall be apt to joyn our suffrage to those in ^*Malachy* 3. 15. and call the *proud*, *happy*: And if we esteem them so, 'tis natural to desire to be like them; so we shall quickly grow to despise a poor or *afflicted Innocence*, and embrace all thriving *prosperous sins*.

nor misjudge him for any trouble or calamity that may befall him here.

19. On the other side, if we look on others in an adverse, calamitous state, this opinion suggests hard and severe sentences concerning them, inclines us to judge where we should succour, and how great an accumulation of Misery that is, we may learn from *Job*, whom we find not so often nor so passionately complaining of any of his *pressures*, as of the unkind *censures* of his Friends, who weighing in this deceitful balance of temporal successes, made very false judgments of him, and as if they were to Glean after Satan, endeavoured to despoil him of that only comfort his malice had left, the conscience of his Innocency. This is, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *to persecute him whom God has smitten*, and *to talk to the grief of those whom he hath wounded*; a thing repugnant to the common temper of humanity, and much more to that tenderness, those affections and bowels Christianity requires; and therefore in this respect also, we may reckon this perswasion very injurious to Christian duty.

We must govern our actions by Gods laws, and not his providence.

20. Nor is it less so when applied to *Causes*, in which it is full as deceitful a Rule as it is in *Persons*: God has design'd us another measure of our undertakings; his *word* and *law*, by the general proportions whereof, we are to square and accommodate our particular *actions*: He sends us not to his *providence*, and the various destributions of that, or allows us to judge of the *Justice*, by the *Success* of our *Attempts*. If that were the trial, 'twere impossible for any enterprize to be lawful, since that which should legitimate it, is subsequent to it, and can have no influence on it, to the making it good or bad: And as it does not make, so neither does it infallibly signifie it to be either: And of those who presume it does, I should ask whence it came to do so? If by any assignation of God, let them produce it; and if not thence, I'me sure it can make no pretence to certainty, God having no where oblig'd his *Providence* to make good our *phancies* and *conjectures*. Nay, if we look into Scripture-examples, we shall find this irrefragably confuted; the same Cause having at several times differing success. Thus the *Israelites* were discomfited at their first assault upon *Ai*, and yet successful after; 'twas something extrinsick to the cause that made the variation, that still continuing the same. The like we find in the case of the *Benjamites*, who though in as ill an engagement as can well be imagin'd, had yet two victories over the other Tribes, *Judges* 20. But there is one instance that may serve for all, and that is the taking of the Ark by the *Philistines*: He that shall contemplate that, will sure never think fit to measure causes by success, unless he will give the deference also to *Dagon*, who then triumpht in the spoils of the God of *Israel*. In short, 'tis evident, victories are not so entail'd upon the justest causes, but that they may be, and often are cut off, either by the guilts of the undertakers, or by some other secret disposal of the Divine wisdom; but the former is so frequently the obvious cause of it, that we are not often put to resort to the latter. 'Tis no strange thing to see all *Israel* troubled by an *Achan*, or have the *Ark* taken captive from off the shoulders of a *Hophni* and

and *Phineas*, nor will it ever be poſſible for the beſt cauſe to ſecure it ſelf from the blaſting influence of its Abettors crimes.

21. This is ſo clear and evident a Truth, that 'tis matter of ſome wonder, how the contrary perſwaſion ſhould ever inſinuate it ſelf; and indeed it is not probable it ever had, if Intereſt, that grand *Sophiſter*, had not introduced it. Men engage in deſigns not on intuition of their *Lawfulneſs*, but *profit*; and when they are ſuch as nothing can warrant *à priore*, their only reſerve is to make them good *à poſteriore*; to bring a licence after the fact, and juſtifie their begining by their end; which how ridiculous ſoever it may ſeem to ſober reaſon, yet ſuch is the natural ſhame; or ſecular inconvenience of owning an *unjuſt Act*, that men will wrap themſelves, though in the thinneſt and moſt *diaphanous veils*, make uſe of the abſurdeſt *pretences*, and fainteſt *colours* to ſhadow their *Guilt*, and whilſt conſciouſneſs bids them ſay ſomewhat for themſelves, and the caſe affords no ſolid plea, they are driven to theſe deplorable ſleights and ſubterfuges. Indeed this is an argument that ſtands ſingle, and is ſeldom uſed but in thoſe cauſes that admit of no better; which we may reaſonably conclude to be the reaſon, why it was ſo much inſiſted on by our late diſturbers, who in ſuch *abundance of light*, as they own'd, could not be ſuppos'd *ignorant* enough to believe themſelves: 'Twas certainly the deſtitution of better arguments that caſt them upon this, forc'd them to ranſack the *Alcoran*, and rifle a piece of *Turkiſh Divinity* to make good their *Saintſhip*. They now diſcern the unskilfulneſs of that *plea*, which a little time has converted to an *accuſation*. The great change it has pleas'd God to make among us, retorting their conquering *Syllogiſms*, and making them need a new ſucceſs to juſtifie their vaunts of the old. God grant we may not here relieve them again, and by our perſonal ſins, help them to that which the juſtice of their Cauſe never did, nor is like to acquire them.

The ſlightest pretences are made uſe of to excuſe ſin after 'tis once committed.

22. But though this *plea* of ſucceſs be frequently urg'd in *policy*, yet it prevails with many who know not that it is ſo; indeed the *vulgar* are ſo much ſubjected to their *ſenſes*, that generally the concluſions drawn thence are eaſily embrac'd, when thoſe from Reaſon and conſcience have a double difficulty, firſt to be underſtood, and next to be admitted, and the moſt *elaborate diſcourſe* ſhall not convince them of the right of that *cauſe*, which in the laſt appeal to Gods Tribunal by War, has been openly condemn'd; whileſt the *ſpoils* of victory as much ſatisfie the Underſtanding of the *juſtice* of the Prize, as the Deſire, with the *wealth* or *glory* of it. And this is it which renders ſuch kind of arguings very pernicious, they being ſo fitted to the common temper, that they ſeldom miſs to be effectual; and engage the *heady multitude* in the Proſecution of the worſt *deſigns*, that are recommended to them by the one *Catholick virtue* of Succeſs. This is indeed as the *Prophet* ſpeaks, *Ezekiel* 13. 22. *to ſtrengthen the Hands of evil doers, that they turn not from their wickedneſs*; to dazzle their Eyes ſo with the ſplendor of proſperous iniquity, that they can never come to take an exact view, and diſcern it in its true form: And doubtleſs this was none of the leaſt-prevailing arts of ſeducement among us, and drew in many to abet thoſe ſeditious practices, which all laws of God and Man prohibited, and whereby *Chriſtian Religion* has at once been violated and defam'd; has not only *her precepts* broken, but *her ſelf* aſperſt with the foul conſequences of that diſobedience, and ſo buys one injury with another; the contempt of her *Authority* with the loſs of her *Reputation*.

Another miſtake of Providence, to judge of the goodneſs of any cauſe by its ſucceſs;

yet God intends our good by all his Providential Dispensations.

23. We have now seen the *ill consequences* issuing from these mistakes of Gods *Providence*, but we must take notice that there remains yet as great or greater danger on the other side; and that a *total neglect* is worse than an *erroneous construction* of it. For though God hath secluded us from that more exact minute discerning of his purposes, yet he means not his *dispensations* should be lookt on as wholly *insignificant*, and therefore has given us the general scope and meaning of them, according to which we are to limit and restrain our *wandring guesses*, and also judge of *particular events*. Now as Gods original and primary *design* in the creation of Man, was to render him a *subject capable of eternal happiness*; so also have all his *subsequent Acts* toward him aim'd at the same end: And because there is nothing removes man so far from that grand purpose of his Being, as Sin; therefore God has made the suppressing of that the universal intendment of his disposals concerning us: So that the most different dispensations do severally pursue that one end; *prosperity* and *adversity* in their successive changes are sent to reclaim us from the *error of our ways*, with this only difference, that the *one* leads, the *other* drives. This is asserted by S. *Paul* who tells us, that *the goodness and long-suffering of God is to lead us to Repentance*, *Rom.* 2. 5. And also that when we are judg'd, *we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the World*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. And indeed the whole Scripture runs in the same strain; and both from prosperous and adverse successes urges the obligation to obedience. This is the notice God expects we should take of all his dealings towards us. And the want thereof we find often sharply upbraided by God to the *Jews*, how often does he recount his redeeming them from *Ægypt*, his enstating them in *Canaan*, and all his wonderful works for them, with an accusing reflection upon their ingratitude; and that we may know his *Judgments* are no less to be accounted for than his *Mercies*, we find him, *Amos* 4. making a *Catalogue* of them, and closing every period with this *Pathetick Reproof* of their obstinacy, *Yet have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord.* In short, God requires that we should observe every turn of his *hand*, in order to the reforming our own *lives*, and by the several *mediums* of Gratitude or fear, infer that *necessary conclusion* of a sincere *universal Obedience*; and the neglect of this is the crime the *Psalmist* mentions, *Psalm.* 28. 5. with so severe a menace, *They regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands.*

National reformation is designed by national mercies and judgments.

24. And as this is requir'd from single persons, so also from Societies and Communities, which as they are in their publick capacities the most eminent subjects of Judgments or Mercies, so are they the most eminently accountable for both. And though the Neglect and Abuse of Gods methods be a very provoking *guilt* when 'tis only *personal*, yet is it much more so, when it becomes *national*: And therefore as it is every mans concern for his own *peculiar* to examine how he has answered Gods methods towards him, so is it an enquiry very pertinent in relation to the *Publick* also; especially where the dispensations have been remarkable and extraordinary; in which respect the *Inquisition* cannot appear more necessary for any than *this Nation*; upon which consideration I hope the Reader will think it no unpardonable digression, if we a-while turn aside after it.

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25. It is the *affirmation of our Blessed Saviour*, that *where much is given, there shall be much requir'd*; a thing so consonant with natural Equity, that we all give our suffrage to it, by making it the measure of our expectations in secular things wherein every man looks for *returns* proportion-

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able to his *expence* or Induſtry. The Husbandman expects a *Crop* anſwerable to his *Seed* and *Labour*. And in the nobler *cultures* of the Mind, we juſtly exact of our Pupils to let their *manners* atteſt the *diſcipline* they have been under: According to which eſtimate we muſt reſolve, that Gods expectations from *us* of *this Nation* cannot but be very high, there being no people under the Sun, whom he has more ſignaliz'd as *his own immediate* care, on whom the *Divine Oeconomy* has more conſtantly and even ſolicitouſly attended in all the variety of ſeaſonable and powerful *applications*.

This Nation hath been bleſt with many mercies, which we have abuſed and forgot;

26. I ſhall not aſſume the work of a *Chronicle*, by giving a ſeries of all thoſe mercies we receiv'd in the loyns of our Anceſtors; and of which we have provided one unhappy memorial, I mean our nauſeating and deſpiſing them; it having been the buſineſs of our days, to diſ-intail thoſe two moſt ineſtimable Bleſſings, of a *pure Religion* and *outward Peace*, which our immediate Progenitors left us; and to derive to our poſterity the contrary miſchiefs of impiety and confuſion.

and been exerci'ed lately with variety of judgments and calamities,

27. But not to ravel ſo far back, I ſhall confine my reflexions to ſo late a date, that I ſhall not need to beſpeak the faith afforded to *Hiſtorians*; ſcarce any that can be my *Reader*, but is qualified to be my *witneſs* too; and muſt acknowledge that there has on Gods part been no Method wanting, that might purifie us to himſelf *a Peculiar people zealous of good works*. To that end of refining and cleanſing us it was, that he kept us ſo long in the *furnace*, permitted us to thoſe many *Fiery trials* of our late calamitous days. 'Twere impertinent here to give a Deſcription of *thoſe ſufferings*, which every mans memory can ſo readily repreſent to him: Or to paint that *Flame* whoſe ſcorchings we have felt; 'tis enough to ſay, that *God* appear'd in them, earneſtly induſtrious to have reduced us; like *a skilful Captain*, beſieg'd us cloſely, ſtraitned us ſo in all our intereſts, that it was ſcarce poſſible for us to fly any where but to himſelf. Indeed he that would make up an exact Catalogue of our Calamities, muſt calculate in how many inſtances humane nature may be paſſive; there being ſcarce any of our ſuffering capacities, to which they were not liberally apportioned, our *Eſtates*, our *Perſons*, our *Friends*, and which is more than all, our *Conſciences*, all groaning under the weight of that *Yoke*, which our own Sins prepar'd, and other mens ſins put on. Which way ſoever we look'd, we ſaw nothing but that which might conſume our *Eyes* and grieve our *Heart*: If on the Church, we ſaw that torn by *Schiſm*, ſpoil'd by *Sacriledge*; the abomination of deſolation ſtanding in the Holy place, and the *houſe of Prayer* made in the moſt literal ſence *a den of Thieves*. If on the State, we ſaw the *breath* of our Noſtrils, the *Anointed of the Lord* taken in their *Pits*, *Impriſon'd*, and *Arraign'd*, and barbarouſly *Murder'd*, by thoſe who ſlew him, like the *Heir* in the Goſpel, that they might ſeize on his *Inheritance*. We ſaw this and all other Miſchiefs eſtabliſh'd *by a Law*, and made as irreverſible as powerful malice could render them. And now in ſuch a diſtreſs, who would not think that ſuch a neceſſity ſhould have become our virtue? and ſo perfect a deſtitution compell'd our reſort to the Divine aid? And as little oppreſt States us'd to make themſelves homagers to the *Romans*, to engage their protection; ſo we ſhould have made an entire ſurrendry of our ſelves to *God*, that we might have gain'd a title to his reſcues and deliverances.

which yet have had no effect toward our repentance and humiliation;

28. This genuine and kindly effect I doubt not but it had in *ſome*, I would fain think in *many*; but we are not now conſidering *particulars*, but the *community*; and therefore how ſincere ſoever ſuch perſonal reformations were, they muſt not come under the account of publick and general,

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26. I ſhall not aſſume the work of a *Chronicle*, by giving a ſeries of all thoſe mercies we receiv'd in the loyns of our Anceſtors; and of which we have provided one unhappy memorial, I mean our nauſeating and deſpiſing them; it having been the buſineſs of our days, to diſ-intail thoſe two moſt ineſtimable Bleſſings, of a *pure Religion* and *outward Peace*, which our immediate Progenitors left us; and to derive to our poſterity the contrary miſchiefs of impiety and confuſion.

and been exerciſed lately with variety of judgments and calamities,

27. But not to ravel ſo far back, I ſhall confine my reflexions to ſo late a date, that I ſhall not need to beſpeak the faith afforded to *Hiſtorians*; ſcarce any that can be my *Reader*, but is qualified to be my *witneſs* too; and muſt acknowledge that there has on Gods part been no Method wanting, that might purifie us to himſelf *a Peculiar people zealous of good works*. To that end of refining and cleanſing us it was, that he kept us ſo long in the *furnace*, permitted us to thoſe many *Fiery trials* of our late calamitous days. 'Twere impertinent here to give a Deſcription of *thoſe ſufferings*, which every mans memory can ſo readily repreſent to him: Or to paint that *Flame* whoſe ſcorchings we have felt; 'tis enough to ſay, that *God* appear'd in them, earneſtly induſtrious to have reduced us; like *a skilful Captain*, beſieg'd us cloſely, ſtraitned us ſo in all our intereſts, that it was ſcarce poſſible for us to fly any where but to himſelf. Indeed he that would make up an exact Catalogue of our Calamities, muſt calculate in how many inſtances humane nature may be paſſive; there being ſcarce any of our ſuffering capacities, to which they were not liberally apportioned, our *Eſtates*, our *Perſons*, our *Friends*, and which is more than all, our *Conſciences*, all groaning under the weight of that *Yoke*, which our own Sins prepar'd, and other mens ſins put on. Which way ſoever we look'd, we ſaw nothing but that which might conſume our *Eyes* and grieve our *Heart*: If on the Church, we ſaw that torn by *Schiſm*, ſpoil'd by *Sacriledge*; the abomination of deſolation ſtanding in the Holy place, and the *houſe of Prayer* made in the moſt literal ſence *a den of Thieves*. If on the State, we ſaw the *breath* of our Noſtrils, the *Anointed of the Lord* taken in their *Pits*, *Impriſon'd*, and *Arraign'd*, and barbarouſly *Murder'd*, by thoſe who ſlew him, like the *Heir* in the Goſpel, that they might ſeize on his *Inheritance*. We ſaw this and all other Miſchiefs eſtabliſh'd *by a Law*, and made as irreverſible as powerful malice could render them. And now in ſuch a diſtreſs, who would not think that ſuch a neceſſity ſhould have become our virtue? and ſo perfect a deſtitution compell'd our reſort to the Divine aid? And as little oppreſt States us'd to make themſelves homagers to the *Romans*, to engage their protection; ſo we ſhould have made an entire ſurrendry of our ſelves to *God*, that we might have gain'd a title to his reſcues and deliverances.

which yet have had no effect toward our repentance and humiliation;

28. This genuine and kindly effect I doubt not but it had in *ſome*, I would fain think in *many*; but we are not now conſidering *particulars*, but the *community*; and therefore how ſincere ſoever ſuch perſonal reformations were, they muſt not come under the account of publick and general,

neral, unleſs for their Number and Eminency they had been ſufficient to have overwhelmed the contrary perverſeneſs: Many there might be whoſe hearts (as 'tis ſaid of *Joſiahs*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 27.) did melt, and yet the far greater number of the obdurate, ſtill juſtly denominate us *a ſtiff-neck'd people*; an Epithet wherewith God often reproaches the *Jews*, and ſure we have no leſs evidenced our title to it: For alas, as if we had meant to revenge the inexorableneſs of our oppreſſors towards us, in our obſtinacy to God; as if when we could keep nothing elſe, we had yet reſerved this ſullen comfort, of having our hearts impregnable, we made a ſhift to hold out againſt all theſe batteries; there was little *appearance*, and leſs *reality* of Repentance; and if ſome of our *luſts* were at all leſs raging, 'twas only becauſe they were ſtarved into a little tameneſs, the *ſupplies* cut off which ſhould maintain our Riot: But when any recruits could be had, they were devoted that way, and even in the worſt of times we miſt not to be as luxurious as we were able: And as though we reſolv'd that *vice* like the *Sea*, ſhould gain in one part what it loſt in another; we took order that what was thus inevitably defaulkt from thoſe *expenſive* Sins, ſhould be made up in the *cheaper*: We could curſe, and ſwear and blaſpheme in ſpight of *Sequeſtration*, and this wretched Immunity we made abundant uſe of, till we even became *Proverbial* for it; and gave our enemies pretence to faſten it on us as our diſtinctive Character. Yet to ſhew our ſelves generous ſinners, there was *one vice* we bought at a dear rate, I mean our as imprudent, as unchriſtian animoſities, and *picques* among our ſelves; a ſin that helpt to revenge all the reſt: And was as well upon a humane, as divine account a grand inſtrument of our *ruine*. To theſe we may add our impatient murmurs at our ſufferings, which did in ſome work ſo prepoſterouſly, as to reconcile them to the inflicters, made them unworthily deſert that cauſe, they found chargeable to maintain, and contrary to the advice of *Solomon*, chuſe the ways of thoſe oppreſſors whoſe proſperity they envied, *Prov.* 3. But of theſe *real Apoſtates* the number I hope was not great, I wiſh I could ſay ſo alſo of thoſe *ſeeming deſertors*, whoſe knees bowed to *Baal*, though their hearts did not: Who belied their own *loyalty*, and in a ſhew of compliance proſtituted *conſcience* in ſeveral Engagements as inconſiſtent with each other, as they all were with duty; and ſuch as they pretend no excuſe for their *taking*, but their reſolutions of *breaking*. It was indeed a ſad ſpectacle to ſee what ſholes every menacing Edict brought in; while men ran in as much haſte to take the opportunity of *Perjury*, as the Primitive Chriſtians were wont to do of *Martyrdom*: Indeed herein we ſeem'd to invade our enemies peculiar, would not ſuffer them to enjoy thoſe marks of diſtinction, they had framed to themſelves; ſo that as far as *oaths* could ſignifie, we were all *one Party*. And yet while we thus diſclaim'd Gods reliefs by theſe indirect attempts of our own, we took it very ill that he left us to the ſucceſs of them: That he proſper'd not thoſe methods he had interdicted, and made us Triumphant, not only over our Enemies but himſelf too: And upon this ſcore many mutinous *blaſphemies* were utter'd, and perhaps ſome more thought, though, I confeſs, generally we were not ſo modeſt, as to ſtick at ſaying the worſt we could think; and indeed they that heard the frequent doubts men own'd of Gods juſtice, providence, nay his very Being, would not think they ſuppreſt any thing as too ill to be ſpoken: We laid boundleſs expectations upon the juſtice of our *cauſe*, and as if we had extremely oblig'd God by not being *Traitors* or *Schiſmaticks*, thought he wrong'd us extremely that he made us not *Victors*. *Samuel* tells *Saul*, that *Rebellion was like Witchcraft*; but we ſeem'd to think

Loyalty

Loyalty was ſo; that like a ſpell, it was to keep us invulnerable, not only againſt our enemies but our Selves: And ſo countercharm all our crimes, that they ſhould only be active to pleaſe not hurt us. But if in the laſt place we reflect on our ſelves even in relation to that *cauſe* in which we ſo much confided, 'tis to be fear'd all men will not be able to evince they ſuffer'd for *God* and the *King*, though they did it in their *quarrel*: 'Tis the Intent muſt denominate whoſe *Martyrs* they were, it being too frequent for private paſſions and intereſts to march under the banner of Conſcience; and we call that ſometimes taking up the *Croſs*, which is only the taking up an *animoſity* or *humour*. Indeed 'tis not poſſible for any to be Gods *Martyr*, who is not firſt his *Servant*; none of us will ſuffer the greateſt things for a perſon for whom we will not do the leaſt; and 'tis abſurd Hypocriſie for a man to pretend he has left *all* for God, who we ſee cannot be wooed to leave the moſt deſpicable *luſt* for him. He that will not part with the noiſe of a loud *Oath*, the pleaſure of an intemperate *Cup*, the applauſe of a profane *Jeſt* for God, will ſurely much leſs expoſe his *liberty*, his *eſtate*, his *life* for him: And therefore what hazards ſoever any man ran in any of thoſe, he can with no juſtice ſet it upon Gods account, unleſs he can produce ſuch other acts of obedience, as may witneſs this to be true and genuine. And upon this trial, I fear *God's party* will appear to have been but ſmall among us, and perhaps *the King*'s not much greater, it being not very probable that thoſe ſhould have any great ſenſe of duty to *him*, that had none to *God*; or that thoſe ſhould religiouſly revere *one* Commandment, who deſpiſed the other *nine*. But we need not the help of inference and probability in this matter, the mutinous and inſolent behaviour of many who profeſt loyalty, did too clearly evince it: And as it is ſaid of *Joab*, that he turn'd after *Adonijah*, though he turn'd not after *Abſalom*, 1 *Kings* 2. 28. and ſome of ours had little private rebellions of their own, even while they oppos'd the more publick. I love not to paſs cenſures on mens thoughts, yet I doubt ſome would be too conſcious to confute me, if I ſhould ſay there wanted not thoſe, who owed their *zeal* to their *Spleen*, and did not ſo much love thoſe they fought *for*, as hated thoſe they fought *againſt*. And it may perhaps deſerve enquiry, whether that demure *pretence of holineſs* their Adverſaries had put on, did not more avert ſome of our *Libertines* from them, than all their *real crimes*: They perhaps ſo far miſtook them, as to ſuſpect they might be in earneſt, when they profeſt to advance the *power of Godlineſs*, and at that took an *Alarm*, and ſuch Men (if ſuch there were) contended not for the Liberty of their *Country*, but their *Luſts*; and could with no juſtice, expect either a reputation, or ſucceſs from that cauſe which they at once helpt to defame and defeat. I am loth to go farther, and ſuſpect that even ſome of the devouter ſort were inſpir'd more by the Spirit of *oppoſition* than *Piety*; yet I confeſs 'tis hard to reſiſt that ſurmiſe, when 'tis conſider'd that our *Liturgie* never had its due veneration, but when the *Directory* was ſet up againſt it. Indeed he that ſhall remember how our *private Oratories* were then throng'd and crouded; and ſhall now compare it with our *empty Churches*, will be tempted to think our *devotion* was of that ſort, which is excited by *interdict*, and deadned by *invitations*; a perverſe kind of Zeal, kindled only by *Antiperiſtaſis* or colliſion; none of that pure flame which deſcends from Heaven. And then as our *Saviour* in another caſe ſays, *If the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs? Matth. 6.* If this fairer and more ſpecious part of us were thus reproveable, how obnoxious were the other? And if our Earneſtneſs in a righteous cauſe, by its Siniſter motives

or

or adherencies be unable to justifie it self, how shall it bear that heavier task we laid on it, and plead for our other Guilts.

but we have increased our sins with our sufferings:

29. This is the true, though not full account of our behaviour under *Gods discipline*, thus did we fructifie upon his pruning us; brought forth indeed nothing but *degenerous fruit*. The *holy Writ* leaves it as a brand of most inveterate Impiety upon *Ahaz*, that *in the time of his distress he sinn'd yet more against the Lord*, 2 *Chron.* 28. 22. and sure we have too just title to the same Character of infamy; those sufferings which were sent to chastise our sins, serv'd but to encrease them, and like the *Israelites* in the *Brick-kilns*, they multiplied the more for their oppression; we debaucht even our *Executioners*, and made every new *calamity* supply us with some new *vice*. And now when Gods *rod* was thus despis'd, we were in all reason to expect he should draw his *sword*, revenge our resistance of his methods, by somewhat we could not resist, make our *Plagues* as obstinate as our *selves*, and involve us in hopeless inevitable ruine. *This certain fearful looking for of Judgment*, *Heb.* 10. 27. was all we had left our selves, of all the rich patrimony we were once possest of; and our present misery seem'd impossible to expire any way but by dying into greater.

Yet Gods mercy hath wonderfully appear'd in our deliverance,

30. But as great Artificers are us'd to magnifie their Art, by chusing the most unlikely materials; so did it please God in this total indispositedness of ours, when we were so unapt subjects to illustrate his mercy, and as if he design'd this *national deliverance* should (in its proportion) be the Transcript of our more *universal Redemption*, he visited us not only in this state of misery, but enmity; when we had set our selves in defiance of his *judgments*, he laid as it were an Ambush of *mercy* for us, and surpris'd us with safety: By such undiscernable ways *return'd the captivity of our Sion*, that *we were* indeed deliver'd *like them that dream*, *Psal.* 126. 1. gave us a *victory* without a *war*; without the intervention of *garments rolled in bloud*, *Esay* 9. 5. invested us in our Triumphant robes, and in a word, made us insensibly to glide into our long forgotten prosperity.

which ought to have obliged us to a suitable change and amendment:

31. And now who can imagine, but this miraculous Mutation *without* us, must also work a Change *within* us? Indeed they must have a very ill opinion of humane nature, that can think it possible it should have perverseness enough to resist such endearments; such kindly Heat must needs be suppos'd to melt us; and if before our Pride disdain'd to be *compell'd*, yet even that stubbornnest part of us cannot object against the being *courted into amendment*. So that when God has thus yielded to our terms, left us not so much as a *Punctilio* in our way to Piety, 'tis but a reasonable expectation we should *embrace* it with as great an Earnestness, as it was formerly *rejected* by us.

But we have ingratefully defeated the designs thereof,

32. And would God we could say we did so; but alas, we still affect prodigies, take a kind of wanton Joy in defeating Gods designs, and as if we aspired to vye Miracles with him, have made our *returns* as unparallel'd as his *mercies*; so that the summ of our account is this. No Nation was ever more signaliz'd by *Gods goodness*, or its *own perverseness*, it being hard to determine in which of those respects it is most *eminent*. That this is in the general perfectly true, there are too many particulars ready to testifie, indeed a whole cloud of Witnesses do concur to the proving the charge. I shall not undertake to examine *all*, yet *some* of the principal it will not be amiss to take notice of.

and almost lost the sense of our late miraculous Deliverance,

33. Before we enquire into the *use* we have made of Gods Mercies, let us a little consider what our *sense* of them is; and sure of all the *interrogatories* we can put to our selves, this appears the *easiest*, the most gentle,

favourable

favourable Teſt, that even our own partialities could elect for us; it being ſo natural to men in miſery to value a reſcue, and celebrate their deliverers, that the contrary would be the only wonder; we ſee even the *Jews*, who were none of the moſt malleable people, yet *deliverances* made impreſſions on them, ſet them to their *devout proceſſions* and *ſolemn hymns* in praiſe of God: Nay, ſuch a piece of native Religion is this, that the *Heathens* exemplifie it to us. The *Philiſtines* when they had taken *Sampſon*, magnified their *Dagon*, as having *delivered their enemy and the deſtroyer of their country into their hands*, *Judg.* 16. 24. So upon the victory over *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 31. 9. *they ſent round about to publiſh it in the houſe of their Idols.* And in all ſtories we find, the *Heathen Altars* were never ſo loaden with *Sacrifices*, as upon ſuch occaſions: And the Goſpel tells us, that thoſe on whom Chriſt beſtowed miraculous cures, were ſo tranſported with them, that their gratitude ſupplanted their obedience, and made them notwithſtanding his prohibition, proclaim the wonders he had done for them: But I fear if we reflect upon our ſelves, we ſhall not be able to match any of theſe inſtances. 'Tis true our late *change* was entertain'd with a Joy *profuſe* enough, but not enough *religious*. We ſaw that great things were done for us, and thereof we rejoyced; but we did not ſo much conſider that the *Lord* had done them, *Pſal.* 124. and ſo were rather affected with the *rarity* and *profitableneſs*, than the *mercy* and *kindneſs* of the Diſpenſation: And though the care of our *Governours* have provided for the religious part alſo, aſſign'd *days of Purim* for the perpetual commemoration of our *deliverance*, yet our ſlight obſervance of them does too fully evince our Joy was merely ſecular; and ſurely he that obſerv'd the numerous and loud *acclamations* in the *ſtreets*, and the few faint *Hallelujahs* in the *Temple*, muſt needs ſay they were very diſproportionate, and that how much ſoever the moſt of us rejoyc'd, it was not in the *Lord*: And then we are not to wonder that it was ſo tranſient; ſince it was merely *earthly*, it muſt needs partake of the fadingneſs of its *original*: Whereas had we deriv'd it higher, it would have been *laſting* and *durable*; it could not ſo ſuddenly have expir'd, had we fetcht it from him, *in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore.* But alas, our tranſports were ſuch as exhauſted themſelves in their own noiſe, we expreſs'd our Joy in *Bonfires*, and it vapour'd away in the *ſmoke*; there wanted that mixture of Piety which ſhould have fix'd that *volatile Paſſion*, and we who at firſt were much more glad than thankful, within a very ſhort time ceaſed to be either.

34. And then as *violent Heats* when once expir'd, are ſucceeded by the *extremeſt Cold*; ſo has it fared with us; we fell from our *Ecſtaſies* not to the mean, but the contrary extreme; our vaſt complacencies at their parting, carried with them even ordinary contentation, and left us not only joyleſs, but impatient. It was indeed matter of equal ſhame and wonder, to ſee a ſcene ſo ſuddenly chang'd, wherein as in many other inſtances, we ſeem'd to have tranſcrib'd the copy of the mutinous *Iſraëlites*, whom we find in the very ſame Chapter, *Exod.* 15. triumphing and repining; and no ſooner were the Timbrels out of their *hands*, but Complaints were in their *mouths*, verſe 24. *What ſhall we drink?* And in the beginning of the next, with the ſame querulous importunity they require meat. But not to wrong them in the compariſon, their Murmurs had ſome extenuating circumſtances which ours have not; they lookt indeed with ſome appetite upon *Ægypt*, and made ſome propoſals of Return, but it was while they ſuffer'd the hardſhips of the *wilderneſs*; they preferr'd

and grown mightily diſſatisfied with our preſent circumſtances.

a repleated *ſlavery*, before a hungry *freedom*; but even they were not ſo frantick in their mutinies, as to make any ſuch offer in *Canaan*, or have any Emulation to the *Garlick* and *Onions*, amidſt the affluence of *Milk* and *Honey*: No, 'tis we Alone that have the unhappy skill of reconciling the ſins of *Canaan*, and the *Wilderneſs*; murmur as much under our *Vines* and *Fig-trees*, as at *Rephidim*, or *Marah*, and make all the out-cries of *want* and *ſlavery*, whileſt we wallow in the utmoſt luxury of *plenty* and *freedom*. I need not here ſpecifie the particulars of our Mumurings, this diſcourſe being not likely to find many whoſe innocence will need that information, this *malignant humor* having ſpread ſo, that 'tis now become almoſt a ſcandalous (becauſe a ſingular) thing to be contented. And certainly a conſidering Foreiner, that ſhould come among us, could not but be aſtoniſh'd to ſee a Nation ſo full of all thoſe things which uſe to create temporal ſatisfactions, and yet to find no body in it ſatisfied; to ſee ſo many parties among us, and none proſperous. This is ſuch a riddle as would tempt a man to ſuſpect his *ſenſes*, and think we had all this while but dreamt of a *reſtoration*: been under the deluſion the *Prophet* deſcribes of the *hungry and thirſty man, that at his waking finds he is empty, and his ſoul hath appetite, Eſay* 29. 8. 'Tis a ſad, but viſible truth, that all that God has done for us, hath been ſo far from filling our deſires, that it has only ſerv'd to enlarge them: for I appeal to any of our loudeſt mutineers, whether if ſome years ſince the preſent ſtate of affairs had been repreſented to them, dreſt in the worſt circumſtances they now complain of, they would not then have thought it extremely amiable, worth *Rachels* prize of ſeven years more hardſhip; nay, whether they would not willingly have made ſome abatements, relinquiſht part of what they now enjoy, to have had the reſt ſecur'd? And when God has granted us all we *then* askt, ſhall we murmur becauſe we could *now* perhaps ask ſomething more; and like ingrate Debtors, pick a quarrel to evade payment? Was it not enough that he engag'd his *Omnipotence* for us, but muſt his *Omniſcience* alſo be preſt upon the ſame ſervice? and provide all he could foreſee we could wiſh? Alas, do we think we have the ſame hank upon God, that ſome Gallants have on their truſting Merchants, that upon peril of loſing all former ſcores, he muſt ſtill go on to ſupply us? Shall we think nothing fit for oblivion but our obligations? And in this perverſe ſence tranſcribe S. *Paul*, *Phil.* 3. 13. *forgetting thoſe things which are behind, reach forward to the things which are before:* this indeed too fully ſpeaks us the off-ſpring of our firſt Parents; we can find no guſt in all the fruits of *Paradiſe* if any one be denied us; and ſtill look not on what we *have*, but what we *want*; and as it is obſerv'd of the greedier ſort of creatures, that they reliſh not one bit for the vehement expectation of another: So is it with us, we *devour*, but do not *enjoy* our Bleſſings; and to require him to ſatisfie us, is to aſſign him the *Poets* Hell, ſet him with *Belus* daughters to the task of filling a *ſieve* with water, or rolling *Siſyphus*'s ſtone; our growing appetites ſtill keeping us empty and reſtleſs amidſt all endeavours to make us otherwiſe; ſo that whereas God uſes to commit his *favours* to Men, as *ſeed* to the Earth, in expectation of an *harveſt*, ſome fruits of gratitude and obedience; they ſeem with us rather to be flung into a *Gulph*, whoſe property is only to *ſwallow*, never to *fructifie*.

Our grievances nothing ſo great now as formerly.

35. I Know mens *Minds* are ſo poſſeſt with their diſcontents, our daily mutinous blaſts have puft up and ſwelled our grievances to ſuch vaſtneſs, that he muſt expect to be very impatiently heard, that ſhall attempt to

to repreſent them in a leſſer ſize; yet ſure 'twere not impoſſible even upon a direct view, to demonſtrate them very *light* and *moderate*: But upon a comparative, perfectly *trivial* and *inconſiderable*; and 'tis a little ſtrange, that we who bare our *late ſuffering eſtate* with ſo much Impatience, ſhould not have impreſſions enough left in our memory, to confront to all our *preſent regrets*. Do we not quietly now poſſeſs the fruits of our own, or our Progenitors *induſtry*, without danger of any Sequeſtration, but what our own Luxuries inflict? Are not our *Perſons* at freedom; deliver'd from that kind word, and unkind thing, SECURING? So that when we riſe in the Morning, we need not fear our next lodging ſhall be in the *Gaol* or Dungeon; nor when we ſit down to our Meal, ſuſpect the intruſion of *arm'd uninvited Gueſts*, who ere whiles, we know, were wont to ſurpriſe us, as the Plague did the *Iſraelites*, *even while the meat was yet in our mouths*; are not our Lives under the cuſtody of known *Laws*, ſo that no man is in danger that will but keep himſelf within thoſe *Boundaries*; nor need fear to be mockt into his Grave by ſhews and Pageantries of Juſtice? And beſides theſe real *eſcapes* from *ſlavery*, are we not reſcued from the moſt imbittering circumſtance of it, the having *ſervants rule over us?* A thing which rendred our ſubjection as mean and ſervile, as it was ſharp and preſſing, and which we were *then* ſo ſenſible of, that it never miſt to *bring up the rear* of our Complaints. Laſtly, if we reflect upon our higher ſpiritual concerns, are we not freed from thoſe boiſterous robuſt *temptations*, which with the violence of Famine and Sword, Beggary and Death aſſaulted our *conſtancy*, and left no mean between Martyrdom and Apoſtaſie? Are we not alſo reſtor'd to all thoſe ſpiritual advantages which we once profeſt ſo much to value? That *well of life* now lies open before us, after which we once panted like the *Hart* after the *water-ſprings*; our ancient *worſhip* is reviv'd, and wants only our attendance to make it ſolemn; whereas the *abomination of Deſolation* ſtood in the holy place, our prayers were turned to ſin; needed, but were denied the *Liturgie* to pray againſt them, or atone their guilts. We have no longer *ſtones* given us for *bread*, nor experiment that ſad riddle, of being at once cloyed and ſtarved; amidſt exceſs of preaching ſuffering a Famine of the Word. And now are all theſe worth no regard? If they are not, why did we exclaim ſo loudly when we wanted them? If they are; why are we ſtill as querulous now we have them? 'Tis ſure, theſe include all our great and ſubſtantial intereſts as men, and Chriſtians, and thoſe being provided for, 'tis not eaſily imaginable what others we ſhould have important enough to make us querulous, unleſs it be thoſe of Paſſion and Humour. One mans *ambition* perhaps wants a ſatisfaction, another mans *avarice*, a thirds *ſpleen*; and this *diſcord* makes up the very unmuſical Harmony of our *murmurs*. If we ſee but a *Mordecai* in the Kings gate whom we wiſh removed, we can like *Haman* find no guſt in any thing we enjoy. If we ſee ſome, who we think have born leſs of the burden and heat of the day, rewarded equally or perhaps above our ſelves, we are ſure to make out the Parable, by murmuring at the good man of the houſe: Or if *Nineveh* be ſpar'd, if all be not executed to whom we have denounced deſtruction, we like *Jonah* ſit down in a ſullen diſcontent, and grow weary of our lives, becauſe others are permitted to enjoy theirs. To theſe and other heads of the like nature, 'tis apparent our *grievances* may be reduced; and then if the balance be put into any diſpaſſionate hand, 'tis ſure they can never become a counterpoize to the other real benefits we enjoy, but will in the *Prophets* phraſe appear *lighter than vanity and nothing*.

Our fears and jealousies afflict us more than our actual sufferings.

36. But I suppose some will say, 'tis not only *present* uneasinesses of which they are impatient, but the possibility of *future*, a fear of relapsing into our former estate by the ill managery of our present: To these I shall answer, that admit it were so, yet sure 'twill be no wisdom to anticipate our miseries, to forestal discontents, and make foresight as painful as actual suffering. In other forbidden instances we chuse to enjoy the present, and with an *Epicurean* Indifferency cry, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32. How is it that we here become so unluckily sagacious, unless it be that murmuring is a Sensuality we account equivalent, nay superior to all rational satisfactions; and therefore that we may have no intermission of that delight, suborn our fancies to find occasions, and fetch in from the future those supplies which the present affords not: But besides this, I should in the second place ask these great *Diviners*, why they do not also foresee, that this very *mutinous temper* of theirs is the most direct and infallible means of bringing those *mischiefs* they pretend to fear; that it is so, is most evident, and so well observ'd by our *Adversaries*, that there is little doubt, they have not only pleasure, but designs upon it; and to that purpose have their *Engins* on work to blow up the *hot Spirits* among us, in expectation from thence to raise a *flame*. So blind a thing is *Passion*, that it hurries on to the things which in their issue we most abhor; makes us our Enemies *drudges*, and the *forgers* of our own shackles; and whilst we cry out of petty Indulgencies, we our selves give them in the *lump*, what we grudge them in *parcels*: This is a miserable infatuation, and while we act thus unreasonably, we are sure no competent declaimers against ill managery. But besides this natural effect of our murmurs, we are also to remember that there is a Divine vengeance attending it: When *bounties* and *largesses* are quarrell'd at, we necessitate God to another Method, nay indeed, not only his *vengeance*, but even his *kindness* seems to suggest it; when he sees our constitutions such, that his gentle applications work contrary effects, 'tis very apposite for him to try whether the *Antiperistasis* will operate on the other side; if we smart thus under *lenitives*, 'tis but fit to essay, if *corrosives* will ease us; and the only remaining experiment for the making us *happy* is to make us *miserable*.

Impossible to have our desires compleatly satisfied in this world.

37. But would God we might yet prevent the need of such unkindly *expedients*, and by a sober estimate, and thankful sense of what we have, provide to conserve it: Not fastidiously despise great and eminent *blessings*, because perhaps they come not home to every part of our *wishes*. Alas, those plenary satisfactions agree not with the nature of Earthly things: 'Tis an observation long since rais'd from the Globular and Triangular form of the World and our Hearts, that 'tis impossible the one should be filled with the other, there will still be some angles, some vacuities left; our very *accessions* create new *wants*; and like an unsound limb, the healing of *one* Sore is the breaking out of *another*. Every thing under the *Moon* partakes of her *vicissitudes*, augments and decreases only with this difference, that though their *wanes* be to as low a degree as hers, they never are perfectly *at the full*. There never was, nor never will be a State here completely happy: And as the *Philosopher* handsomly reproacht the impatience of the *Persian* King for the death of his Wife, by undertaking to revive her, if he could help him but to the names of *three* men, that had never griev'd, to write upon her *Tomb*; so surely we may make the like offer to our *malecontents*, and engage to redeem all their uneasinesses, if they can point us out (I say not three, but) *one age* wherein there were no *complaints*. What then are our clamorous Repinings, but so many loud *invectives*

vectives againſt Gods *decree*; a Deſire to ſubvert his fundamental *Law*, and confound the *diſtinction* he has irreverſibly ſet between our *Earthly* and our *Heavenly* ſtate? And alas, What mad inſolence is this, to expect that the whole *Oeconomy* of the world muſt be chang'd only to humour us? That God muſt replant us a *Paradiſe*, pluck up every one of the Briars and Thorns which were our native curſe? Nay, bring down *Heaven* to us, and enſtate us in undiſturb'd unmix'd felicities? This is indeed ſimply conſidered a very wild expectation, but yet more ſo, when 'tis conſidered how we qualifie our ſelves for ſuch a priviledge: For let me ask, are we as eager to anticipate the *holineſs*, as the *happineſs* of Heaven? Do we as paſſionately deſire to do *Gods* will, as that God ſhould do *ours*? And emulate the *Angelical obedience* and purity, as much as *bliſs*? Theſe are Interrogatories which need no verbal Anſwer, our lives do too fully reſolve them in the negative; and then how ſhameleſs a partiality is it, thus to carve to our ſelves, and chuſe out of either ſtate what we beſt like, reſerve all the *ſenſualities* of this world, and yet cry out for the *impaſſibleneſs* of the next; but alas, theſe are pretenſions as inconſiſtent as they are bold, *vices* having ſuch a native inſeparable adherency of *pain* and *vexation*, that 'tis not the moſt dexterous managery of a ſin that can ever ſever them, but if we will retain the *one*, we muſt the *other* alſo: A Truth which might be exemplified to us throughout the whole *Catalogue* even of ſenſual ſins; but it is moſt eminently viſible in this of *murmuring*, which ſtays not as others do to take Pain at the *rebound*, and by way of reſult; but has it as its firſt *Element* and principle; it being it ſelf almoſt as great a pain, as any it can betray us to: And yet to ſecure an advance and *perpetuity* of Torment, every Event ſerves to foment and heighten it, and the moſt deſperate things are equally combuſtible to that *flame*. Indeed he that is poſſeſt with that humour, has a kind of fury within him, that will never let him reſt: And alas, what *Legions* of ſuch evil Spirits are now among us? How are we as it were inſpir'd with *Mutiny*, it being the *univerſal dialect* of the Nation; and of many in it, who cannot be ſuppos'd to found it in any obſervation of their own, but are led by the *common genius*, and bellow rather by conſent with the reſt of the herd, than for any uneaſineſs, at leaſt of *injuſtice* and *oppreſſion* (for ſuch only give pretence for *Mutiny*) that themſelves feel. And ſince 'tis become a *Plebeian vice*, would God our *Gentry* would uſe it as they do their *faſhions*, and leave it off (if for no better reaſon) for its being *vulgar*: And indeed 'twere but equitable, that thoſe who have taken up ſo many ſins upon *punctilio*, ſhould for once lay down one upon the ſame ſcore. The *Athenian* State put down their *Oſtraciſm* (which otherwiſe they were fond enough of) becauſe it was debaſed, by happening to fall on *Hyperbolus*, a deſpicable and abject perſon: And there ſeems not much difference in the caſes, ſave only that we are more tenacious of *Sins*, than they of *Puniſhments*; and I fear we ſhall ſo long retain this, till we find it its own *Lictor*, not only in the *preſent uneaſineſs*, but in that more *fruitful harveſt* of Miſchiefs, whereof it has now ſown the ſeeds. We ſee here what our thankfulneſs is, for thoſe eminent miraculous mercies we have receiv'd, and the account of that is an unhappy *ſpecimen*, what we are like to find, when we ſurvey the uſes we have made of them, which God knows have been ſo unnatural and perverſe, as does too fully parallel the former inſtance.

The worſhip of God, though but lately reſtor'd, is yet already neglected by us.

38. For firſt, if we reflect upon our *ſpiritual bleſſings*, what has the enjoyment of thoſe advantages produced, but the contempt of them? We have an eaſie free acceſs to God in his Sanctuary, our *Churches* are no longer

longer *Garrisons* to keep out the worship to which they were devoted, but like *hospitable doors*, are open to the regular piety of any that will enter. And now we have this liberty, now the *flaming sword* is removed, we have lost all appetite to the *Tree of life*, can willingly let those *Everlasting gates* (as the *Psalmist* stiles them) *Psal.* 21. *stand* as everlastingly *open*, ere we enter them: And though the Fabricks are by Gods providence rescued from their dust and ruines, yet many of us endeavour to reduce them to a yet worse desolation, strive to depopulate those sacred Mansions, and execute against them that *prophetick threat* concerning *Nineveh*, *Nahum* 1. *Leave them empty, void and waste.* And indeed so they are, if not in an absolute, yet in a Comparative sence; for could we at any time of *Divine Service* make an estimate of *all* the persons that are absent, 'twould scarce be discern'd that *any* are there; were all corners ransackt, what a multitude of *Recusants* should we find upon a far differing account from that of Conscience? Some we should see stretching themselves upon their beds, keeping a Sabbath indeed, but to their *sloth*, not their *God*; others perhaps we may find rous'd from their Couches, upon the summons not of *Religion* but *vanity*; some new garment is to be fitted, some exotick dress essayed, and they who grudge *one hour* to the Preachers glass, can spend *many* at their own; where they are so taken up with their *Idolatries* to themselves, that they think of no other worship; nay, as the world goes, 'twere well this were the worst diversion, that some did not keep from Church, that they might in the interim, defile those lesser Temples of God they carry about them, and cut themselves off from the Communion of *Christs body*, to make themselves *members of an Harlot*: Or that others were not *Bacchus* his Votaries when they should be *Gods*, spend that time in their frantick revels, and sing a *Dithyrambick* instead of *Te Deum*. As for the *Mammonist*, if he keep any holy day, 'tis like the *Israelites* to his *Gods of Gold*, *Exod.* 32. 31. He is looking with veneration on his Idoliz'd treasure, numbring those bags he dares not use, or perhaps with a more active Zeal pursuing the means of encreasing them. Thus alas, may we go from one to another, and as it was in *Ezekiel*'s vision, see still greater abominations, *Ezek.* 8. And certainly that All-seeing Eye, which discerns what multitudes do thus busie themselves, at the times even of his solemnest worship, cannot but adjudge us most profane despisers of his mercy in restoring it: Yet would to God 'twere only the *absent* upon whom that sentence would fall; but alas, the behaviour of many in the Church does too loudly testifie how little of devotion brings them thither, and at how mean a rate they value all that is done there: Those *Eyes* which there should wait on God, as those *of a Servant on the hands of a Master*, *Psal.* 123. 2. are rolling about to fetch in all the vanities and temptations which can occur to them, and look *every way*, but *towards Heaven*. Our *Tongues* which should be toucht with a Coal from the Altar, devoted wholly to Hymns and Prayers, are busied in *private Colloquies* with those about us: Business, News, nay, all the impertinent chat of our most vacant hours, is then taken up to entertain us; so that he who would know the *talk of the Town* or neighbourhood, need go neither to Exchange nor Market, the *Church* will as certainly supply him: And this ill employment of our *Tongues*, engages the like of our *Ears*, which when they should be hearkening what the Lord God will say concerning us, are listening to those *vain discourses* we hold with one another; from all which outward indecencies we may too surely collect the inward irreverence of our heart. And is it possible that this should now be the Temper of *those*, who not long since seem'd to bewail

their

their *excluſion* from thoſe ſacred Aſſemblies? Did we long for *them* as *David* for the *waters of Bethlehem*, when they appear'd unattainable, and when they are brought to us, refuſe to taſte them, pour them out not as he did in *devotion*, but in *contempt*? 'Tis true indeed, in *temporal* Delights *poſſeſſion* uſually proves a nauſeating thing, and takes off our *appetite*; but it uſes not to be ſo in *ſpiritual*, whoſe peculiar property it is, not to ſatiate, but excite by fruition: But alas, though the Things we converſe with are *ſpiritual*, our Hearts are *carnal*, and that is the cauſe why inſtead of crying out with the *Pſalmiſt*, *When ſhall I come to appear in the preſence of God*, *Pſal.* 42. We, like thoſe in *Malachy*, Chap. 1. 13. *Snuff at his ſervice, and ſay, What a wearineſs is it?* A wearineſs indeed it appears in the literal ſence with many, who ſleep at it as men over-labour'd, and ſcarce take ſo ſound repoſe in their own houſes as in Gods; indeed ſuch is the variety of rude behaviour that is there us'd, that ſhould an *unbeliever* come into our Aſſemblies, he muſt ſurely (as S. *Paul* ſuppoſes in another caſe, 1 *Cor.*14.23.) ſay, *we are mad*; to ſee ſome gazing, ſome whiſpering, ſome laughing, others ſleeping, and perhaps the far fewer number praying, is ſuch a *medly*, as the moſt brutiſh *Idolaters* never admitted in their *worſhips*; and the way of worſhipping *Mercury*, by throwing ſtones, or *Hercules* by curſing, is a ſober and decent kind of ſervice compar'd with this. And now alas, when will the *Church* recover its ancient Title, and become the *houſe of prayer*? 'Tis ſure according to the preſent appearance it may have many more proper names, that being the leaſt part of the buſineſs done in it: 'Tis true, there are ſome that make it a *Sanctuary*, but 'tis only againſt the penalties of the *Law*, or reproach of arrant *Atheiſm*; they come to ſave their money or their credit; others perhaps ſhun the ſolitarineſs of being at home, and come not as to a place of *Devotion*, but *Concourſe*; and 'tis to be doubted, ſome viſit that place as they do many others, becauſe they have nothing elſe to do: They want their week-days diverſion, and ſo are driven thither upon mere deſtitution of more grateful entertainments; make it a kind of *Sunday play-houſe*, ſit there as Spectators or Judges, to ſee the *company* or cenſure the *Preacher*, but never remember that themſelves have any other part to act; or are beheld by *Him*, who will not always be patient of ſuch profanation; but will, as the *Scripture* ſpeaks, *Repay them to their face, who thus contemn him to his.* We know among men, every one counts his Houſe his fortreſs; and an Affront offered him *there*, doubles the Injury, and is not only a *contempt*, but an *invaſion*: And ſhall it not be a proportionable enhanſement with *God* alſo, thus to defie him *within his own doors*, and approach his preſence in an impious bravery, the more fully to ſhew him, how little we regard him? At this rate while we addreſs our ſelves, we may as ill-manner'd Gueſts be *forbid his houſe*: Interrogated by God as the *Jews* were, *Iſa.* 1. *Why doſt thou tread my Courts?* A total abandoning of Worſhip being more fair and ingenuous than ſuch Devotion: Wherein like the *barbarous ſouldiers*, we bring Chriſt a *Scepter*, only to *ſmite* him on the head with it; and make a preface of *homage*, to give our ſelves the ſport of the *mockery*: Nay, 'tis ſadly to be fear'd, that God may *thruſt* us out of his Houſe, *ſhut* his Doors againſt us, *reſcue* his Service and himſelf from our profanation, and put us again under the ſame, (or a worſe interdict than that) which lately lay upon us.

39. Having now ſeen our ſcandalous Irreverence towards Gods worſhip in *general*, 'tis too eaſie to make Application to the *ſeveral parts* of it; every one of which muſt neceſſarily partake of the contempt which falls upon the whole; for while we bring no thoughts but *ſecular* with us; thoſe are equally

The great ſin and danger of contemning Gods holy worſhip.

equally diſagreeing to all the *Divine* offices: 'Twill be needleſs therefore to trace our wandrings in each of thoſe, ſince our whole *behaviour* in the Church is one great *deviation* from the buſineſs we ſhould come about: Yet that ſuperſedes not to every guilty perſon himſelf the neceſſity of a more diſtinct and particular reflection. 'Tis ſure at the *laſt dreadful Audit*, we muſt account for every of thoſe ſpiritual advantages we have abus'd; and alas, what a *diſmal reckoning* will many of us have then to give up, when our *prayers* which we now turn into Sin, ſhall be turned into *perdition?* And we *who* would not ſupplicate our *God*, ſhall in vain invoke the *mountains and hills to hide us from the face of the Lamb*, when that Word which we now ſo faſtidiouſly deſpiſe, that it muſt be dreſt up in the colours of humane Rhetorick, to make us at all patient of it, and becomes then only tolerable to us, when it is fartheſt removed from being Gods: When *that word*, as our *Saviour* ſpeaks, *ſhall judge us*, and that gracious *invitation to life* end in that fatal ſentence, *Go ye curſed.* Nay, when our very propitiation ſhall *plead* againſt us, and the crucified Body of our Saviour, which we have *in Effigie* ſo often recrucified in our unworthy approaches, or impious neglect of the holy *Euchariſt* ſhall *witneſs* againſt us as its *murderers*, when we ſhall be found not *ſprinkled* as with the bloud of a *ſacrifice*, but *imbrued* as with that of *ſlaughter:* When all theſe means of our ſalvation, ſhall thus miſerably convert, and from the *ſavour of life*, become that *unto death*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. then we ſhall to our amazement find, how differing our eſtimates of them were from Gods; and in his vengeance read the value he put upon them. What then have we now to do, but to anticipate our *dooms-day*, and *judge our ſelves that we may not be judged of the Lord.* To make an impartial account of all theſe our profanations, and accuſe our ſelves before his *mercy-ſeat*, that ſo we may prevent the arraignment at his *bar of Judgment.* And as Offenders are uſually enjoyn'd to acknowledge their guilts in the very places where they committed them; ſo let us make the *Church* the Scene of our *penitence*, as we have of our *faults*: By our ſtrong crying and tears, deprecate our former indevotion, and by an exemplary Reverence, redreſs the ſcandal of our Profaneneſs. This, and only this is the way to ſecure us againſt the *final* Vengeance of theſe ſins; nay, and againſt the *intermedial* alſo: For we are not to expect that ſo unkind abuſe of mercy ſhall be wholly reſpited to another world, it being ſo exaſperating a *crime*, as muſt in all probability awake Gods *fury*, and pull down preſent Judgments. I wiſh the Event do not too ſoon atteſt the reaſonableneſs of this ſuppoſal.

Our peace is abuſed to publick Profaneneſs and Impiety,

40. If from our *ſpiritual* Bleſſings, we now deſcend to our *temporal*, we ſhall not appear much better managers of thoſe; they being generally employed to purpoſes the moſt diſtant from thoſe, for which they were given. And firſt for our *peace*, that great comprehenſive enjoyment, upon which all others are dependent, and which is to our *civil* Capacities, the ſame that *health* is to our *natural*; the thing by which we reliſh and taſte the reſt of our comforts, we may from the Song of *Zachary*, *Luke* 1. learn for what intent God beſtows it: *Deliverance from enemies* is to no other end, but that we may *ſerve God in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of our life:* But alas, he that obſerves how we employ our quiet, muſt ſurely ſay it ſerves little to the advancement either of Holineſs or Righteouſneſs: For the firſt of theſe we have already ſeen, how little of *holineſs* we ſhew even in that place where nothing elſe ſhould be admitted; and we are not ſo prepoſterouſly religious, to ſhew more in others. That *Piety* which is ſo cold and benumm'd under the warm breath of the *publick Ordinances*;

we

we may well preſume ſtark frozen, in our more retir'd offices: And if it thus faint and ſink in conſort, 'tis ſure more liable to the Wiſe mans *Væ ſoli*, and utterly dies when we are alone. 'Tis true indeed, theſe *Cloſet-tranſactions* are immediately viſible to none but the *ſearcher of hearts*, yet in true Devotion there is ſuch a *Symmetry* and proportion, that the Inferences we make by *analogie* may be very irrefragable: Nay, 'tis to be fear'd many lye open to a yet clearer *conviction*, and may be proved to have few or none of thoſe private intercourſes with Heaven; for though a negative be not ſimply evincible, yet as in civil caſes we prove a man not to have been at this time in ſuch a place, by his having actually been in another; ſo were the whole Week, Month, perhaps Year, of ſome men exactly traced, we ſhould find them ſo engroſſed with other *diverſions*, that there will ſcarce be found any Minute for *devotion* to interpoſe: Mens worldly or fleſhly Concerns ſo divide their *time*, that God from whom 'tis all deriv'd, can be afforded no tribute out of it. Yet alas, 'twere well if this privative ſort of impiety were all we had to anſwer for: But 'tis too apparent we do not only *neglect* God, but *reproach* and violate him: What elſe are thoſe bold and inſolent *blaſphemies* wherewith we daily aſſault him, making him the mark at which all our wild Paſſions are ſhot. Do we want any thing either for our *uſe* or *delight?* Preſently *God* is accuſed, his *providence* or his *goodneſs* queſtioned; and he declaim'd againſt, either as impotent or illiberal. Does any body vex or diſquiet us? God muſt have his ſhare of our diſpleaſure, his ſacred name muſt be profaned, and we count our fierceſt *Revilings* of men, faint and inſignificant, if not inſpired with the moſt *dreadful* and *horrid Oaths*; Nay, he ſtands obnoxious to all the diſplacencies we receive even from inanimate creatures; if a *Die* or a *Card* run amiſs, our reſentments are preſently vented upon him; he is profaned and vilified, as if he were the *Cheat* that rookt us of our *money*, becauſe he does not ſecure us from thoſe loſſes, to which we wantonly expoſe our ſelves. Nor is it only our eager and warmer *paſſions* that thus invade him: Our pleaſanter *moods* do the very ſame, and we blaſpheme by way of divertiſement; every impertinent ſtory or inſipid *Jeſt*, muſt have the haut-gouſt of an Oath to *recommend* it, as every incredible Narration has to *atteſt* it: To ſay nothing of thoſe more ſolemn and deliberate *perjuries*, wherein we impiouſly ſuborn Gods venerable and dreadful *name*, to be the Engine of our fraud and malice: And as if we thought he would forſwear as well as we, bring him to *countenance* thoſe Crimes he has vowed to *puniſh*. Thus do we with a prodigious impiety contaminate even Divinity it ſelf, make it the ſink for all our puddles to run into; and proſtitute that *name*, which as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, is *great, wonderful and holy*, to all the unholy *purpoſes*, our Paſſions, our Intereſts, or our Fancies can ſuggeſt to us.

41. This *profaneneſs* is ſo proper a foundation for *Atheiſm*, that we are not to wonder to ſee ſo many advance from the one to the other; they pay ſo little of the reverence due to God, that at laſt they turn their *impiety* into *argument*, and infer him not to be God, whom they treat ſo unlike one. And truly this ſeems to be the grand piece of *Logick*, which has diſputed many, not only out of *Chriſtian* but all *native* Religion. How unhappily ſucceſsful it has proved among us, is too apparent in thoſe impious diſcourſes which are every where heard, wherein men are arriv'd to ſuch a licentiouſneſs, that *Davids Atheiſt* was a modeſt Puny, who only ſaid in his Heart, *There is no God*, and perhaps upon that account ſhall by ſome be adjudged to deſerve the Epithet the *Pſalmiſt* gives him, and be indeed

which commonly ends in downright Atheiſm;

thought a *fool*, that would not own what would now a-days so certainly denominate him a *Wit*, or in the solemn stile, a *Master of Reason*. And indeed they will attest the property of the stile, they rather *governing* Reason, than being *govern'd* by it; otherwise 'twould be hard to discern, how from different *premisses* the same *conclusion* should be induced: And those who in the late adverse times denied God in revenge of their sufferings, should now pay their gratitude also in the same manner, and renounce him as (or more) loudly, since his signal attestation of that *righteous cause*; his not owning whereof was then their *principal plea*. The truth is, 'tis a little strange how Atheism could admit such enhansing accessions as we find it has; for it being the completion and highest step of Ill, and that to which all others do but subordinately tend, one would think, it should from its first appearance in the world, have been so mature and full grown a sin, as could be capable of no improvement; but so subtilly wicked are these latter days, that we can never be brought to a *non ultra*, but still find something to add to the completest sin: Therefore though of those that are really Atheists, one cannot be said to be more so than another, yet some may be more daringly, and mischievously so; and sure in that respect our *modern* surmount all *former*: They were generally on the defensive part, took up the *tenet* as a *buckler* against the unwelcome invasions and Checks of conscience, and design'd nothing but the more *peaceable enjoyment* of their *lusts*; but *now* men do not only use, but love it; make themselves its avowed *Champions*, seek to win it *Proselytes*; and in short, appear so zealous for it, as if they made it their *religion* to have none. And God knows, too many such reversed kinds of *Evangelists* we now have, who with as great design unteach Divinity, as the first Propugners taught it; and their *number* and *boldness* have so encreas'd since the return of our *peace*, that sure the next Age will have little cause to think *Religion* had any share in the *Restoration*. Thus have we done our parts to supersede that obligation of serving God in holiness, by leaving no God to serve; and after the most signal attestation of his Deity in our rescue, *we* do like those *ingrate persons*, who seek to subvert those by whom themselves were establish'd, and *deny* him because he has *own'd* us.

and is accompanied with fraud, injustice, and wrong dealing,

42. This is the *holiness* wherewith we have serv'd him, since our being deliver'd from the hands of our Enemies, and our *righteousness* has been very proportionable; for if we look into the dealings of all ranks of men, we shall find the same vein of *deceit* run through all transactions. A few years since Sequestration and Plunderings, those *whole-sale robberies* had so over-topt the rest, that like an *Epidemick disease* they had overwhelm'd, if not the *kind*, yet at least the *notice* of all other Injustices: But since those *Leviathans* are withdrawn, the *lesser Devourers* supply their place; Fraud succeeds to Violence; and in all places, all occasions of commerce, we still meet with Sequestrators. The adulterated wares and false measures in *Shops*; the dilatory proceedings, and evasive tricks in *Law*; the various and unworthy Cheats of *Creditors*, and the mean and dishoneſt advantages which are watcht in all sorts of *Contracts*, are too irrefragable proofs hereof. Nay, not only our Business, but our very *recreations* expose us to these deceits, as some of our bankrupted Gamesters can too sadly witness; what troops of *Harpyes* attend those sports is every mans observation: 'Tis strange so many should yet be to learn the prudence to avoid so known a danger, wherein a man is at once made active and passive in the same Robbery, and does himself defraud his *family* of that, whereof he is defrauded by *another*. But amongst these many injustices, there is none wherein Men seem

ſeem generally to find ſuch a guſt and ſenſuality, as thoſe wherein God is concern'd; *twenty* Lay-booties humour them not ſo much as *one* from the Clergy; and if the Quakers ſhould be muſtered according to that one Tenet of not paying Tithes, we ſhould indeed find their numbers formidable. How ſubtle even the rudeſt perſons are in defaulking thoſe dues, we ſee by every days experiment, the over-reaching their Miniſter being the grand Triumph of a Ruſticks wit; ſo that not only their covetouſneſs, but their vanity is concern'd in it: I know 'tis the uſual *apologie* for this kind of Sacriledge, that either the *maintenance* of the Clergy is too much, or their *merit* too little; for the firſt, I think it may be demonſtrated, That there is no *liberal Science*, and but few *Mechanick trades*, from which a man may not hope as plentiful a *ſubſiſtence*, as this affords to the generality of its *profeſſors*: However I ſhall leave thoſe that make this objection to diſpute it with that authority, which has allotted them this proportion; deſiring them to conſider, that whatever the ſupport of the Clergy is, it coſts them nothing; no man having purchaſt more, than what remains of the Eſtate, after his Tith is paid. As to the ſecond, I confeſs 'tis extremely to be wiſht, that the *negligence* and *vice* of Some did not give too much *pretence* to the Allegation; and to ſuch I cannot but apply the words of our *Saviour*, Matth. 18. 7. *Wo be to the man by whom the offence cometh*; yet certainly 'tis very incompetent, to juſtifie the detention of their *legal rights*: For till the Law which has aſſign'd them, delegate the Forfeiture to me, the greateſt *enormities* of my Paſtor, cannot entitle *me* to any thing that is *his*: And indeed what blame ſoever is really due to *ſome*, we muſt expect it ſhould extend to *all*, if the Accuſers were to have the benefit of the Mulct; and (as in the late confuſions) all Miniſters ſhould be made *ſcandalous*, in order to the making them *poor*.

43. 'Twere eaſie to draw up a far larger Catalogue of thoſe *injuſtices* we daily commit; for as a man has divers other concerns beſides his goods, ſo he may be injur'd in all thoſe: And truly the iniquity of theſe days, ſeems fully commenſurate to all the ſuffering capacities of mankind: We *weigh* our own and others Concerns in very *differing balances*, and *offer* thoſe Injuries without any regret, which we can with no patience *ſuffer*: How nicely jealous is every one of us of his *own* Repute, and yet how maliciouſly Prodigal of *other mens?* ſo that Defamation is become one of our main *Topicks* of diſcourſe, furniſhes entertainment to all companies; the *preſent* owe their Divertiſement to the *abſent*, and many would be drein'd quite dry, were it not for this reſerve, which like an unexhauſtible ſpring, ſtill ſupplies freſh matter of talk. In like manner how carefully do we avert any hurt or mutilation of our *own bodies*, and yet how barbarouſly inconſiderate are we of *others*, to whom we do the greateſt out-rages, rather than uſe any violence to our paſſion, or reſtrain an angry Humour: Only I confeſs there is one Inſtance, wherein though we are *unjuſt*, we are not ſo *partial*; but expoſe our ſelves alſo; and that is in the caſe of *Duels*; a barbarous cuſtom wherein 'tis hard to define, whether the Wickedneſs or Folly be greater; yet it maintains its way in ſpight of all the methods God has us'd to make us better or wiſer: Of this there are too many, and too noted inſtances ſince our reſtoration, as if we were ſo enamour'd of *deſtruction*, that when we are prevented of it from our *Enemies*, we ſeek it from *one another*; or thought *publick Peace* ſo intolerable, that when 'tis caſt upon us (as ſure ours, if ever any may be ſaid to be) we are fain to take in private quarrels, as our reſcue from that dull quiet, and court the utmoſt *miſchiefs* to avoid the oppreſſion of the greateſt *happineſs*. Thus perverſly do we countermine

and with the defaming of our Neighbour, and endangering his life, by frequent murders, and ſpecially in Duels.

termine Gods purposes of kindness; and when he has secur'd us, solicitously seek to be deliver'd from our safety; project new *dangers*, and dare his power with a yet harder Task, the *delivering us from our selves*: And whilst we thus avert our quiet, 'tis no wonder that we produce no better effects of it; not fructifie under that, which we will not permit our selves to enjoy.

Our plenty is abused to Excess and Intemperance.

44. And as upon this general view, we appear very ill managers of our Peace, so shall we much more, if we reflect on those many particular blessings which are wrapt up in that, of which we make so perverse use, that we therein no less violate *Sobriety*, than we have already appear'd to do *piety* and *righteousness*; so filling up the measure of our iniquity by transgressing all the fundamental rules of Christianity, *living* neither *soberly*, *righteously*, *nor Godly in this present world*, *Tit.* 2. 12. And of those *advantages* which are the appendages to Peace, there are two most eminent; *Plenty* and *Liberty*, both of which are the more remarkable in our present quiet, by how much the deprivation of each was the greater. For the first, we know the *late times of rapine*, had torn from many among us their whole subsistence, so entirely despoil'd them that they were reduc'd to *Jobs* condition and connected the two extreme points of Birth and Death, by a middle state of the like nakedness and destitution: And to such, our late *restoration* was a kind of Civil *resurrection*; rais'd them like *Elisha's* dry bones, from the most hopeless state, and by a successive possession of their own *Inheritances*, made them *heirs to themselves*. And though all were not so wholly divested, yet like those *Canaanites* whom the *Jews* did not extirpate, they were put under Tribute: And while persons who knew so well how to exact, were *Lords Paramount*, a bare Being was all could be expected; they seem'd rather Stewards than owners of their *fortunes*, and had rather the trouble, than advantage of their *Managery*: And who would not think that this so long want of plenty should have taught us sobriety in the using it? That *desuetude* should have worn out the skill of *luxury*, and we should not have known how to be riotous: But alas, our memories have been too faithful to us in this particular; no one of our vanities is fallen into oblivion, but on the contrary the art of Voluptuousness so improved, as if all the time that was lost from the *Practick*, had been spent in the *Theory*, and we had for so many years been contriving new kinds and degrees of excess. Indeed it is too sure, we retain'd the *affection*, when we had lost the *power* of rioting; and 'tis not our prosperity seduces us, but we it. For as the *Sun* though it lends its rays to the begetting of the vilest *Insects*, yet makes no such production but upon apt matter, *slime* and *putrefaction*: So neither would the most opulent fortune make us sensual, did it not find us dispos'd and prepar'd for it. How forcible those *propensions* are, appears by the multitude of *objects* on which they work; For they had need be strong Inclinations that take in all Opportunities, nay, possibilities of actuating themselves, and such 'tis evident ours are, there being nothing capable of ministring to luxury, which we use not to that purpose. Our *Meat* is no longer apportioned to our Hunger but our Tasts: So that the *Stomach* is made merely passive in the matter of Eating; serves only to receive those loads we charge it with, whilest its Elections and Choices are forestall'd by the *palate* or *fancy*; nay, 'tis not permitted so much as a negative voice, not allowed to refuse what is either for kind or quantity destructive to it: We do with studied mixtures force our reluctant appetites, and with all the Spells of *Epicurism*, conjure them up that we may have the pleasure of laying them again. Thus unworthily

worthily *treacherous* are we to Nature, which while we pretend to *relieve*, we *oppreſs*, by giving her not only beyond her need, but ſufferance: And to ſhew we are no leſs dexterous in mixing *ſins* than *meats*; our very *Pride* (though in it ſelf an intellectual vice) mingles with our *Gluttony*; every thing is inſipid that is not coſtly; and it is thought an ignoble Peaſant-like thing to eat a plain meal: Nor is he now to be lookt on as a Gentleman, whoſe ſingle Ordinary coſts not as much as would be (and himſelf would perhaps ſome years ſince have thought) a fair exhibition for ſome whole families. And that we may not be charg'd with *partial intemperance*, we go not leſs in that of drink; wherein we are ſo nice and critical, that 'tis become a ſpecial skill and faculty to *judge of liquors*: But how great ſoever our *curioſity* be, 'tis ſure our *exceſs* is greater, and does not only over-match but ſupplant it; there being no drink ſo unpleaſant, which the love of a debauch will not reconcile us to. So great a malice do we bear to our *reaſon*, that to oppreſs it, we are content to expoſe our darling, and do violence to our very *ſenſe*. How unhappily predominant this brutiſh Vice is, need not here be told, ſince it too evidently atteſts it ſelf to every mans obſervation, it no longer ſeeking the ſhelter of night and darkneſs, but impatient of ſuch delay, appears in the broadeſt light; and he is now a *ſlow-paced drunkard*, that has not finiſht his *courſe*, perhaps begun another, before the *Sun* has ended his: Nay, ſo is the Scene chang'd, that *ſobriety* is become a reproachful thing; ſuch as even thoſe who value it dare not own, and are either driven to *preſerve* it by ſhifts and artifices, or elſe chuſe to *abandon* it rather than hazard the ſcandal. And certainly this is the great advantage this ſin has for the propagating it ſelf; for 'tis impoſſible *Beſtiality* ſhould be ſo univerſally agreeable to mankind, that all ſhould purſue it out of *appetite* and liking: 'Tis this Fear that engages many in it; and though it hath too many *voluntiers*, yet ſure 'tis this *preſs* that helps to make up its *numbers*; which as it ſpeaks the great baſeneſs of thoſe who are thus aſham'd both of Piety and Humanity, and had rather ceaſe to be *men*, than appear to be *Chriſtians*; ſo is it a ſad indication of National impiety, a fatal Symptome that we have near fill'd up the meaſure of our iniquities, and are ripened for the woes denounced againſt thoſe who *call evil good, and good evil*, *Eſay* 5. 20. which ſure was never more palpably done than in this inſtance, wherein *temperance* is branded for *ill nature*, and dullneſs of humour; whilſt the moſt *ſwiniſh exceſs* muſt paſs for *ſociableneſs*, *friendſhip*, and *hoſpitality*; names which have been ſo long proſtituted, that they have loſt their native uſe, and men have forgot thoſe very diſtant things to which they originally belong'd: Yet ſure ſuch once there were; God made us *ſociable creatures*, and we might ſtill continue ſo upon the ſtrength of that firſt principle, and need not owe our *intercourſe* to our *debaucheries*; no, nor our friendſhips neither, which have been ſo far from being preſerv'd that way, that there is nothing more obviouſly, and frequently violates them; nay, indeed the whole ſpecies of *real* Friendſhips ſeems to be extinct, ſince this *fictitious* ſort took place. Men think it enough (as indeed 'tis too much) to damn themſelves with their friends, and all other communications are tranſmuted into that of Sin; for we daily ſee thoſe, who cleave the moſt inſeparably in this kind to each other, will yet neither do, nor ſuffer any thing elſe: And ſure if this be *friendſhip*, 'tis ſuch a reverſt kind of it, as muſt have as prepoſterous a *Definition*; for none that have yet been given by *Divines* or *Philoſophers* will fit it. The like may be ſaid of *hoſpitality*, which ſure is in its proper nature of a very diſtant make from this; deſign'd to *relieve* Strangers, not *burthen* them;

them; to cure their wants indeed, but not by the worse exchange of a Surfeit: So that the *ancient* and the *modern* Hospitality differ as much as that of *Melchizedeck*, from that of *Circe*: The one refreshes, the other transforms: And how great a shew soever of liberality this later may have, yet he is not to be thought to have drunk *gratis*, that has paid his *reason* for his *shot*.

to Lust and Uncleanness,

45. And to both these parts of Intemperance, our Uncleanness bears full proportion; the one *makes provision for the flesh*, and the other *fulfils the lusts thereof*. To how brutish an impudence this sin is grown is too visible: We need not trace men into their privacies and recesses, themselves willingly proclaim their guilts; nay, dread nothing so much as the opinion of being innocent: Yea so out-dated a *virtue* is modesty now become, that even that Sex, to which it was once accounted the greatest ornament, have put it off, look on it as a piece of *Rusticity*, and *country-breeding*: Whether this pulling down the *fence* be an Indication they are willing to lie *common*, I shall not determine: But sure that very free and confident behaviour now in use, is too apt to invite assaults, and takes off all that Extenuation of crime, which was wont to be allowed that Sex, upon the supposition of their being seduced? Thus do we publish our Sin as *Sodom*, and if we consider how much boldness it has gain'd since the return of our *prosperity*; 'twill be probable that ours also has been fomented by *fulness of bread, and abundance of Idleness*, *Ez.* 16. 49. That our Plenty is very subservient to it, appears by the *vast expence* wherewith many men manage this vice: And that our Idleness is so too, is no less evident by the *large portions of time* that are spent in those pursuits, it being, as the great design, so the especial business of too many mens lives. As for the *remedy* which God has assign'd, it serves now only to exasperate the *disease*. Marriage with too many only advances simple fornication to adultery, and superadds perjury to uncleanness; those sacred bands are like *Sampsons* Withs, broken upon every assault of the *Philistines*, and the very thought of being confin'd makes men more apt to range: For alas, 'tis not their *needs* but their *Fancies* they are to provide for, and that is so endless, that the greatest liberty of *Polygamy* would never satisfie it: The same quarrel would lie then to multiplied wives, which does now to single; I mean, that they were their own: And how numerous soever their *flock* were, 'twould not secure their poor neighbours only *Lamb*; especially when 'tis consider'd, that in this they gratifie two sins at once, their *vanity* as well as their *lust*; their complacence in *undermining* the Husband, being generally as great, as that in *enjoying* the Wife. And if *Pride* abstractedly and in its own nature be, as *Solomon* says, *an abomination to the Lord*, certainly when 'tis thus complicated, it must be infinitely more so, and ascertain a concurrence of those *Judgments*, which are singly threatned to each of those *Sins*? What those are, I wish guilty persons would seriously ponder, and then they would surely think their momentany pleasures much over-bought. But alas, such a fascinating sin this is, as allows men no liberty of consideration, they go on as the *wise-man* says, *Prov.* 7. 22. with the same stupidity that an *Ox goeth to the slaughter*: Or, *a fool to the correction of the stocks*; and while every body else observes the Effects of their Vice in their wasted *bodies*, and ruin'd *estates*; themselves are the last that discern it, pursue the *course* till the very last remains of strength and wealth are exhausted, and nothing left them but *disease* and *beggery*. Of the truth of this, there have been too many sad examples, though it seems not yet enough, to give caution to others.

46. And

46. And to theſe *luſts of the fleſh*, we ſpare not to add thoſe of the *eye* alſo; for ſo ſurely we may properly call all thoſe *Luxuries* which adapt themſelves peculiarly to that Faculty; ſuch are the *gaiety* of Apparel, *richneſs* of Furniture, and all the *ſplendor* of Equipage which has no propriety to any other ſenſe, but that of *ſeeing*, and is loſt if it be not lookt on: And though theſe ſeem to differ much from that *Covetouſneſs* which S. *John* is ſuppoſed to comprehend in that Phraſe, the one being the *tenacity*, the other the *profuſion* of Money; yet they are but ſeveral branches of the ſame Sin, and are diverſified only by a various application to the *Object*: For in ſtrict ſpeaking, he that covets Gold and Silver to lay on his *back*, is as properly *covetous*, as he that deſigns it only to fill his *coffers*. But beſides the propriety theſe *exceſſes* have to that title, they have no leſs claim to that enſuing, *The Pride of Life*; it being evident that they are both effects and Fomenters of Pride: And ſure this ſets but an ill Character upon them, that when the *Apoſtle* has divided all the *luſts* of the world into *three ſorts*, theſe bid ſo fair to *two* of them. I would not here be underſtood to condemn that Decency and moderate Expence, which agree to the ſeveral ranks and qualities of Perſons, there being not only a *lawfulneſs*, but ſome kind of *civil neceſſity* for ſuch Diſtinctions: Nor is the levelling principle fitter to be admitted in Habit, than in Title or Eſtate: That which I accuſe is quite another thing, it being that inordinate profuſion, which does not only exceed the ability and fortune of the Perſon, but the proportion of his rank and condition; and ſo confounds that diſtinction it ſhould preſerve, and levels us the wrong way: It being more tolerable that all ſhould be *Peaſants*, than all *Lords*. And this is the irregularity that many ſeem to affect, there being not only an emulation of pomp and bravery among equals, but thoſe of the moſt diſtant qualities, there ſeeming now no other *meaſure* than the utmoſt extent of their *money* or *credit*; the latter whereof is often ſo ſtretcht, that it not only cracks it ſelf, but by an unhappy contagion, breaks thoſe it deals with, and like a *Granado* tears Towns in pieces: The many ruin'd Families of *Tradeſmen* do too ſadly atteſt this: Would God our *Gallants* would conſider how unequal it is, that many ſhould want *neceſſary cloathing*, only to maintain the *ſuperfluity* of theirs; an Injuſtice which not only upon a *religious*, but *politick* account deſerves the ſevereſt Reproof, and ſince *Divine* Laws will not reſtrain it, 'twere well if *Humane* were provided: Though I confeſs, 'twere not eaſie to find out penalties to deter thoſe, whom the wants ſo uſually attending theſe exceſſes will not diſcourage. This ſort of *vanity* was once thought peculiar to *women*; and though I cannot ſay that the ſexes have exchang'd faults, (becauſe each ſtill keeps its own, together with thoſe of the other) yet 'tis evident they have communicated them; and as the *Women* of this Age have tranſcrib'd *Maſculine* Vices, ſo the *Men* have *Feminine*; this particularly, wherein they ſeem fully to anſwer the Copy, they being as Critically knowing in all the myſteries of vanity, and as diligent in reducing their *ſpeculations* to *practice*, as any the moſt extravagant Female. Indeed both the one and the other purſue this *folly* with ſo great an expence of Care, Time, and Money, as if to be fine and happy were the ſame thing, and their *bodies* had been deſign'd for their Cloaths, rather than their *cloaths* for their Bodies.

and to Pride in Apparel, Furniture, and Equipage;

47. And now when all theſe luxuries are to be ſerv'd, it had need be an exorbitant plenty that ſhall ſupply them; and that will unfold the riddle ſo frequent among us, of ſo many being poorer ſince they recovered their eſtates, than when they wanted them: Our *revenue* how large ſoever, is ſo

which hath occaſion'd the ruin of many Families and great Eſtates.

ſo clogg'd and incumber'd with our *vices*, that they moulder away, and only ſerve to carry other mens with them, by giving credit to run in debt. There are indeed no ſuch unmerciful *exactors* as our own Luſts; the one gleans after the other, till they induce ſuch a ſcarcity, as the Prophet *Joel* deſcribes, 1. 4. *That which the Palmer-worm hath left, hath the Locuſt eaten, and that which the Locuſt hath left, hath the Canker-worm eaten, and that which the Canker-worm hath left, hath the Caterpillar eaten:* So that in effect, we have only changed our oppreſſors, and are as much or more exhauſted by our own ſins, as we were before by other mens; with this woful circumſtance that now we have the *guilts* as well as the *ſufferings:* Thus do we rob our ſelves, and create *want* in the midſt of all that *abundance* God has given us, uſing our plenty as the *Benjamites* did the *Levites* Concubine, *Judg.* 19. force and proſtitute it, till we deſtroy it; and the ſimilitude holds in this alſo, that what we thus violate is not our own; for let us fancy what we will, certainly our *ſuperfluities* are more the *poors* Right than *ours*, aſſign'd to them by God the grand Proprietor. So that our Exceſſes have, beſides their proper *guilt*, that of *injuſtice* ſuperadded; and when the cry of the *poor* ſhall be joyned to thoſe of our riots, they will certainly be too clamorous to let vengeance any longer ſleep.

Our liberty is abuſed to the breach of the Laws, and contempt of the Government;

48. This is the account we can give of our *plenty*, and that of our *liberty* is not much better; 'tis not long ſince that *arbitrary tyranny* expir'd, which gave us no other *meaſures* of our duties or puniſhments, than the *will* or *avarice* of the Impoſers: And then how did we gaſp to be under the conduct and Protection of *known determinate Laws?* Yet now we have them, who conſiders them, or is regulated by them? Between the *licentiouſneſs* of Inferiors, and the *remiſneſs* of Superiors, they are rendred things only of *form*, not *uſe*; for while the one violates, and the other connives, what can they ſignifie? And though there be never ſo many *new* Laws made to aſſert the *old*, yet we ſee they ſerve for little but to partake of the ſame contempt with the others, and are but like the *Chimæra's* of an *Utopian State* ſagely contriv'd, but to no purpoſe. 'Tis the execution of Laws that gives them a real and effective being, and without that, amidſt our great volumes we are yet deſtitute, and may too probably experiment the truth of that *Axiome*, that *'tis better to live where nothing is lawful, than where all things are.* Indeed if we remember how the Statutes of *Omri* were kept, with what a tameneſs the ſevereſt Impoſitions of the *late Uſurpers* were ſubmitted to, we have reaſon to think, *coercion* is the ſureſt Principle of *vulgar obedience*; though withal it ſets but an ill mark upon us, who know ſo much better how to be *ſlaves*, than *ſubjects*. And as we are reſtor'd to our *civil* Liberty, ſo as a branch or conſequent of that, we are to our *perſonal* alſo: We were lately in the condition Chriſt foretold to S. *Peter*, carried by others whither we would not, *Joh.* 21. 18. but now we gird our ſelves and go whither we will; and alas, what uſe do many of us make of this *freedom?* Is it not viſible, that neither our publick nor private affairs are the better attended? But on the contrary we are in a reſtleſs purſuit of impertinent or vicious *paſtimes*, go pilgrimages to our *pleaſures*, wander about from this ſport, that meeting to another, till many of us forget we have any other concerns in the world, and are as much ſtrangers to our own homes, as when we were forcibly detain'd thence: And for ſuch I know not whether the former reſtraint be not eligible, to be a *priſoner* being a kind of reſcue to him, that would otherwiſe be a *vagrant*.

which is an argument of horrible ingratitude and diſingenuity.

49. Theſe are the *uſes* we make of thoſe *advantages* whereof God has poſſeſt us. I know 'tis too envious a task to diſtribute theſe accuſations to every

every Rank and Order of men among us; I have here given them in the lump, and wiſh that not only ſuch *degrees*, but each *perſon* would adapt to himſelf his *peculiar ſhare*, wherein contrary to other *dividends*, I fear the only Immodeſty and Injuſtice too will generally be, for every one not to carve liberally for himſelf. However, 'tis ſure in the groſs they make up the *Character* of a moſt barbarouſly *ungrateful Nation*. God was pleaſed to return our *peace*, before we had forſaken our *ſins*, as if he meant to try our ingenuity; that we who had been ſo much worſe than beaſts under the former method, that no ſtripes would diſcipline us, might have this advantage to redeem our credit, and be drawn with theſe cords of a man: But we have put off not only *piety* but *humanity*, and are equally untractable to all methods. And now who can refrain from *Moſes*'s *paſſionate Apoſtrophe*: *Do ye thus requite the Lord O fooliſh people and unwiſe!* *Deut.* 32. 6. Unwiſe indeed, that from the moſt benign *purpoſes* of God, extract nothing but our own *miſchief*: Are the poorer for his Liberalities, and the worſe for his Goodneſs; by a prepoſterous uſe ſo wear out our Bleſſings, that they ceaſe to be, at leaſt to be *Bleſſings*: And if they once fall from that, there is no middle form for them to aſſume; they convert into the direct contrary, and become the fatalleſt *Curſes*, more heavy than thoſe which were originally deſign'd as ſuch; that degeneration adding malignity, and no *Fury* being ſo extreme, as that which bottoms upon repell'd and *irritated Love*. Gods *mercies* are like thoſe *pictures*, which according to the different poſition of the beholder, carry different Repreſentations; if we will ſtill ſtand on the wrong ſide, and not take them in their more *amiable* appearance, we ſhall find they can put on a *dreadful*: His Goodneſs will not be finally unoperative; if we will not permit it to lead us to *repentance*, 'twill drive us to *deſtruction*. I am ſure we have all reaſon to expect he ſhould exert his power as eminently againſt us, as he has done for us; unleſs perhaps he ſees that is not neceſſary to our ruine; for indeed let him but ſtand by and not interpoſe his omnipotence for us, he may truſt us to be his *Executioners*, our Vices having a *natural* as well as *moral* Efficacy to deſtroy us. And who knows whether that be not the reaſon of his ſeeming connivence, that he forbears to ſtrike us, to give us up to thoſe more fatal wounds we inflict on our ſelves; this alas, we have too much cauſe to fear; for 'tis ſure, 'tis not our *innocence* that gives us Impunity, but 'tis more than probable 'tis our *incorrigibleneſs*; that God gives us over with a *why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more?* Will not proſtitute his Judgments; but as the baſeſt of *Malefactors* leave us to the baſeſt of *Executioners*, and let our iniquities become our ruine. This as it is the ſevereſt purpoſe God can entertain towards us, ſo 'tis our moſt important concern to avert. And O that we, who have ſo perverſly reſiſted all the deſigns of his *love*, would now try to defeat that of his *anger*, rob him of thoſe inteſtine avengers within our own breaſts, thoſe *fleſhly luſts which fight againſt the Soul*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 10. which do not only provoke, but execute his Wrath, and make us more miſerable than *Hell* it ſelf could do without them; and God knows 'tis more than time for us to ſeek an eſcape from ſo *formidable miſchiefs*: O let us not contract one minutes delay, let us caſt our ſelves at the feet of our offended God, and as thoſe who are condemn'd to diſgraceful Executions, uſe to petition for ſome death of leſs Infamy, as a *boon* and *favour*; ſo let us beg, that he will pleaſe to think us worth his *own correction*; that whatſoever we ſuffer from his hand, yet that we may not (like to *Herod*) be deliver'd up to the loathſome fortune of being devour'd by our own putrefaction. In a word, let us form *Davids choice* into an importunate *prayer*, and

earneſtly beg that we may *fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of men,* at leaſt not of *our ſelves,* who are more to be dreaded than all our other *Enemies.*

God will call us one day to an account for all theſe things.

50. Indeed till we do thus, our proſperities are far from real, and do in this juſtifie our moſt mutinous repinings, that we are never the better for them, nay, much the worſe; yet ſince 'tis only we that have enervated them, they will ſtand upon our account in their proper weight and value: When our *receipts* are ſummed up, God will charge us with them, not as thoſe empty *uſeleſs things* we have made them, but as thoſe great and *ſolid bleſſings* he intended them. And certainly this is moſt deplorable ill managery, to reſerve nothing to our ſelves but the *burthen* and *account* of our good things; to enjoy nothing, and yet be anſwerable for all. In ſecular things men uſually pay with ſome regret for thoſe things, of which they have only anticipated the *uſe:* But with what diſmal reluctances ſhall we come to pay for theſe, of which we have made no *advantage?* And muſt therefore pay the dearer becauſe we have not; it being not ſo much the things, as our employing of them to our benefit, whereof God will exact account. His *anger* is then only incens'd, when we reſiſt his *love:* And his only quarrel to us is, for fruſtrating his deſign of making us happy. And ſure thoſe well deſerve his wrath, that will provoke it on ſuch terms yet ſo perverſe is the *choice,* as of all ſinners in general, ſo eſpecially of *this Nation* at this time, who have all before us which might make us happy in both worlds, if we did not Madly affect to be ſo in neither. God grant we may recover the Sobriety to make *wiſer elections,* before it be out of our power to make any, and we be found to ſtand to the miſchiefs of our own wild Option.

51. The Reader will perhaps think I have gone beyond the limits of a moderate digreſſion; but the too great *copiouſneſs* of the Theme, muſt be my *excuſe:* Such over-grown Vices cannot well be drawn in little; and where there is ſuch a multitude, the moſt ſuperficial view of Each, is rather proportional to a *diſtinct Tract,* than to the *few Pages* it has borrowed in this. My greater fear is, that the event may prove it impertinent, there being not much hope that a *private whiſper* ſhall be heard by thoſe, who are deaf to the *loudeſt calls* of Heaven, and have made no other *uſe* of thoſe various and ſignal Providences we have been under, than to defeat the *deſign* of them.

CHAP. IX.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Diſputes in general.

Chriſtian Religion much injur'd by our over eager diſputes and contentions about it,

1. THeſe are ſome of thoſe many artifices, whereby Satan like a cunning *Picklock,* ſlily robs us of our grand *treaſure,* the power and efficacy of our Chriſtianity, and leaves us only the empty *Casket,* the name and formal Profeſſion; that which ſerves only to make us *proud,* not *rich*; *Confident,* not *ſafe:* And God knows, ſo many are daily thus befool'd by him, ſo many fall as preys to theſe his *Stratagems,* as might, one would think, glut the eagereſt malice, and ſuperſede all farther deſigns: But ſo inſatiate is this grand Devourer, that *retail-prizes,* though never ſo frequent, do rather enrage than ſatisfie his *appetite:* He is Enemy not only to this or that man, but to *mankind* in groſs, and therefore as if he fear'd that even his malice might not prove indefatigable enough for ſo many diſtinct purſuits, he contrives more compendious methods of deſtruction; frames ſuch *Engines* as take off whole ranks, nay troops; compounds ſuch active *Poyſon,* as like a Peſtilence, kills multitudes at

at once. It is too trivial a Miſchief to annoy the *outward parts*, it is his Maſtery to ſpread an unſeen venome in the *Bowels*, thence to diffuſe it ſelf throughout, mix with the vital ſpirit, and convert that *kindly heat* which ſhould animate, into thoſe wild *irregular flames* which ravine and conſume. And this is done by that Peſtilential ſpirit of *diviſion*, that heat of *diſputation*, which has for ſo many ages poſſeſt and waſted the *Catholick Church*; and by an unhappy kind of Magick transform'd the zeal of Chriſtian *practice* into an itch of unchriſtian *Diſpute*; made the *queſtions* about our *Creed* more numerous than the *letters* of it; and by multitudes and contrariety of *Paraphraſes* ſo confounded and obſcur'd the *Text*, that what was anciently the badge and *teſſera* of Chriſtian Communion, ſerves us for no other purpoſe, but as an occaſion of breaking it.

2. So long as the Church retain'd the *ſimplicity* of Chriſtian doctrine, lookt on her *faith* as the Foundation of her *obedience*, and endeavour'd to propagate to her Children ſuch an underſtanding of the one, as was moſt apt to promote the other; She happily made good the title *Chriſt* gives her, *Can. 6.* of his *Love*, his *Dove*, his *Undefil'd* one; but when the *Serpent* had once got into this Paradiſe, infus'd his *ſubtilties*, and nice intricacies into mens brains; and leſt that ſhould not be ruinous enough, his *venome* alſo into their Hearts: Then began all thoſe unhappy *Metamorphoſes*, in compariſon of which, thoſe of the Poets are as *trivial* as they are *fabulous*: Then that *faith* which was once inſeparably joyn'd with the *patience* of the Saints, forſook that tame company, and linkt it ſelf with the moſt contrary qualities of *wrath* and *bitterneſs*; and thoſe whoſe Profeſſion it was to *reſiſt* unto bloud, ſtriving againſt ſin, *purſued* to bloud thoſe that reſiſted them in any of their ſpeculations: Then that paſſive valour which had rendred them ſo venerable to their Heathen Enemies, converted ſome, tired out others, and amaz'd all; ſadly degenerated into that active malice which from *perſecuted Chriſtians*, entitled them to that monſtrous ſtile of *Chriſtian perſecutors*. And that *ardent love*, which had offered up ſo many Holocauſts to God, was ſupplanted by that *fiery hatred*, that made no leſs acceptable oblations to Satan.

which have turn'd the Ancient ſimplicity of Chriſtians into wrath and bitterneſs towards one another.

3. This miſerable and deſtructive *change* was ſo much the intereſt of the Enemy of Souls, that we cannot wonder he ſhould ſo ſtudiouſly promote it; and indeed never did he at once ſo approve his *malice* and *ſubtilty*, I would I could not ſay ſucceſs alſo, as in this *deſign*; in compariſon whereof, all his other Projects ſpeak him but a Puny; this is his one *Goliah ſtratagem*, which has ſerv'd him not only to *defie*, but even *defeat the Armies of the living God.*

The Devil at firſt raiſed up Hereſies to diſturb the Peace, and break the Unity of the Church.

4. Nor is his Sagacity more obſervable in the *choice*, and main drift of the Deſign, than in the *ways* of Effecting it; had he brought into the *Primitive* Church thoſe large ſcrolls of diſputable points, wherewith he has filled the Modern; that more charitable Age muſt needs have ſtartled and diſcern'd, that that *ſeeming Jealouſie* for Truth, was indeed nothing but a *real deſign* againſt Peace; and would ſurely never have parted with that ſacred *depoſitum*, that precious legacy ſo lately bequeath'd by Chriſt, for thoſe vain janglings, thoſe School-ſubtilties which now entertain the world. But as he that would divert a man from the *guard* of ſome important Treaſure, alarms him in ſome other of his greateſt *intereſts*; ſo he at firſt raiſes up *Hereſies* of the greateſt magnitude, whoſe blaſphemous conſequences ſo ſhook the whole Fabrick of Religion, that what was *Uzzahs* Raſhneſs, ſeem'd then every mans adviſed Duty, to *put his hand to the upholding of the tottering Ark.* How could thoſe who had been baptiz'd into

the faith of the blessed Trinity, suffer the *Arians* to rob them of the Second Person, the *Macedonians* of the Third, the *Valentinians* and *Manichees* so to despise the First, as to set up against him a Rival principle of being? How could those who had so solemnly renounc'd the World, the Flesh and the Devil, see them all bowed to by the temporizing, unclean, idolatrous *Gnosticks?* These were such invasions as seemed to commissionate all that could wield the sword of the Spirit to take it up and engage in this Warfare. But all this while 'twas a sad *Dilemma* to which the Church was driven; if she gave countenance to these *seducers*, she betrayed her *faith*; if she entred the *contest*, she violated her *unity*; the one would undermine her *foundation*, the other would make a breach in her *walls*.

and hath occasion'd a great deal of quarrel and contention (in or) about lesser matters,

5. And the Devil was too old an Artist to lose the *advantage*; he knew well, that even just and necessary *defence* does, by giving men acquaintance with War, take off somewhat from the abhorrence of it, and insensibly dispose them to farther *Hostilities*; and therefore he fail'd not to provide *sparks* for that matter, which was now grown so combustible; nor did he always send them from the *bottomless pit*, but sometimes borrowed fire from the *Altar* to consume the Votaries, and by the mutual collision of well-meant *zeal*, set even Orthodox Christians in a *flame*. A memorable instance of this was the *dispute about Easter*; wherein while the veneration they had of the glorious Resurrection of *Christ*, prompted them to commemorate it in the exactest manner they could, the *Serpent* creeps into this Paradise, and though they had the same common end, yet on occasion of some little dissenting in the way, the heat of *devotion* insensibly degenerated into that of *contention*; and by being very tenacious of a circumstance of that *celebration*, they lost the more essential requisite, that of *Charity*; kept the Feast indeed, but with the leven of malice, and absurdly commemorate the redintegration of his *Natural* Body, by mutilating and dividing his *Mystical*. So likewise in the business of Rebaptization, while one side in a pious abhorrence of *Heresie*, thought the stain like that of Original Sin, could not be done away by any Purgation less solemn than that of Baptism, and the other in a just reverence of ancient *custom*, and jealousie of *innovation* opposed it; the Dispute lasted till the Scene was changed, and those who deliberated of the manner of *receiving* Hereticks into the Church, were themselves as such *turn'd* out of it. No less well meant were the *Originals* of the *Novatian* and *Donatist* Heresies, and as equally unhappy were their *issues*: For in them all, when bitter *Zeal* was once fermented, through its aptitude to receive, and the Devils vigilance to administer occasions, the *Orthodoxy* or Heresie of lives soon became terms out-dated, and men were measur'd only by *opinions*: That *sword of the spirit* which was at first design'd against vicious practices, had its edge turn'd against *speculative* notions; in so much, that at last like that of *Joab*, 2 *Sam.* 20. 8. it had got such an aptness to fall out, that it was always a ready instrument of Execution, till even a Philosophical point, as that of the *Antipodes*, was resolv'd with an *Anathema*; and not to know the Systeme of this *present* World, made forfeiture of that *to come*.

which that wicked one hath improv'd into innumerable Sects and Schisms, which swarm in the Church.

6. But alas, these, though great defections from Primitive unity, were but modest essays, and feeble assaults, compar'd with those which infested the succeeding ages: This *root of bitterness* was then but a *probationer* in the soil, and though it sent forth some off-sets to preserve its kind; yet *Satan* was fain to be at some pains to cherish and nurse them up, placed them under the shadow of the *Sanctuary*, and got them like the treacherous Ivy, supported by that *piety* they were designed to destroy; but it was not long

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ere they had got firmer rooting and ſtrength, not only to propagate, but multiply. Every Diſpute in Religion grew *prolifical*, and in ventilating one queſtion, many new ones were ſtarted: And as *queſtions* grew numerous, ſo did *Sects* too; every Opinion almoſt conſtituted a new party, and thoſe again ſubdivided into many others; ſo that of all the firſt Violators of Primitive unity, we ſcarce find any, who did not revenge their *Schiſm* upon themſelves, by ſeparating one from another, as they had all done from the *Church*; till at laſt the progeny both of Sects and Opinions grew ſo numerous, that he who would exact an account, muſt be ſent like *Abraham*, to the Sky or to the Shore; the Stars or Sands being as apt a ſubject of *Arithmetick* as they. Whence it is brought to paſs, that *Satan* now may leave his toilſom labour of compaſſing the Earth; men do his buſineſs for him, giving him leiſure to be only a Chearful *Spectator* of their *Divinity-prizes*; the bloudy combates of *Eccleſiaſtick Gladiators*.

Our Diſputes are now become a particular Art or Science in the Schools.

7. And that he may be ſecur'd never to want that pleaſing divertiſement, the *later Ages* have been careful to train him up *Combatants*, it being now become a diſtinct ſort of Learning, a new Species of Divinity, to raiſe nice *queſtions*, create new *difficulties*, branch out with fond *diſtinctions* our holy Faith, which the pious Simplicity of the firſt Chriſtians receiv'd to practiſe; not to read upon as an *Anatomy*, unbowel and diſſect to try experiments, much leſs to bring into the *Theatre*, there made to fight and bleed, to ſhew men ſport, and try the skill of the unhappy ſword-men, the Maſters of defence. *The form of ſound words*, which in its native frame and conſtitution was moſt enlivening and ſalubrious, diſſolv'd and melted by *Chymical preparation*, ceaſes to be nutritive; and after all the labours of the *Alembeck*, and hopes of an *Elixir*, inſenſibly evaporates, and vaniſhes to Air; or leaves in the recipient a foul *Empyreuma*, or fretting corroſive. An endleſs dotage about names and words, and then as endleſs a quarrel for them, appearing the commenſurate *effect* of the long ſtudies of thoſe *Diſtillers* in Divinity, who boaſt its Sublimation.

whoſe too curious and ſubtle diſtinctions have promoted contention to the loſs of mutual love and charity.

8. It is indeed a thing worthy of the greateſt both wonder and lamentation, to ſee how the plaineſt, and moſt *ſimple propoſition*, when it falls into the hands of theſe *Artiſts*, is mangled and disjoynted, is rarified, exalted and refin'd: He whoſe leiſure, or indeed whole life, would ſerve him to ſurvey all the ſubtil Diviſions and Diſtinctions of the *School-men*, would ſure reſolve, they had the power of working *Miracles*; *Queſtions* in their hands multiplying in the breaking, like the *loaves* in our *Saviours*. But ſure the event of the Miracles are very diſparate, no ſolid nouriſhment being deriv'd by the one, but on the contrary, Stones given us inſtead of Bread, and thoſe too for the worſt purpoſes, even to fling at one another, as if becauſe *ſtoning* was the death of the firſt Chriſtian *Martyr*, we deſign'd his *Charity* to the ſame fate with himſelf; that *divine Goſpel grace* having ſince fall'n under as thick a ſhowre, and with this ſharp aggravation too, that whereas he ſuffered from *Jews*, *Chriſtians* are become its *executioners*: Whilſt thoſe who pretend to be *Champions* of the Faith, Irrefragable, Angelical, and Seraphical *Doctors*, not only fill the Church with quarrels whilſt they live, but bequeath them in their writings to poſterity; as *Ziſca* is ſaid to have done his skin, to be made an Incentive to war and confuſion.

The plainneſs and ſimplicity of the Chriſtian Religion is perplexed and confounded with Philoſophical niceties.

9. It was the policy of *Julian* to ſhut up the Fountains of humane learning from the Chriſtian youth, leſt they ſhould there gain ſuch acuteneſs, as might render them the more formidable Adverſaries to *Paganiſm*: But could he have foreſeen that they would have employed thoſe Weapons not againſt

againſt the *common Enemy*, but *one another*, he would ſurely have revers'd the Stratagem, freely opened thoſe *Magazines* whence they might furniſh themſelves for their mutual ruine, and have as ſolicitouſly *promoted* their Learning, as ever he *obſtructed* it. I am very far from abetting their arrogant folly, who either decry humane learning in general, or make it ſuch a *Moabite*, or *Ammonite*, that however it be admitted in *civil Converſe*, muſt be interdicted the *Sanctuary*. Our Religion preſcribes us rational not brutiſh Sacrifices, and therefore, deſpiſes not any of thoſe *advantages* which may improve our reaſon, exalt the *man*, and depreſs the *beaſt* in us: Yet ſure we ſhall derogate very impiouſly from Chriſts prophetick office, if we allow not Divinity to be the Supreme and nobleſt Science; ſuch as is to be ſerv'd and attended, not regulated and govern'd by thoſe inferior: But that juſt order ſeems now to be inverted; *divine* learning is brought down to *humane*; the *Simplicity* of Chriſtian doctrine ſo perplext and confounded with *Philoſophical niceties*, that *Plato* and *Ariſtotle* are become the Umpires of our Religion, and we muſt go ask *Heathens* how far we ſhall be *Chriſtians*. Thoſe *deep things of God*, as the *Apoſtle* calls them, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. and of which he pronounces the natural man an incompetent Judge, are yet brought before *that Tribunal*, ſubjected to be ſcann'd by rules of Art: But alas, our line is too ſhort to ſound thoſe Depths. Men raſhly undertake to underſtand *incomprehenſible*, to order *infinite*, define *ineffable* things: And then no wonder if their conceptions differ; for where there is no viſible truth, wherein to Center, *error* is as wide as mens *Fancies*, and may wander to Eternity: While multitudes run careers in the dark, it is not ſtrange to have them juſtle, and overthrow each other.

We ſhould be more careful to practiſe the plain Truths of the Goſpel, than curiouſly enquire into the Myſteries thereof.

10. And doubtleſs were the *Controverſies* which have ſo long haraſed the Church throughly examin'd, many of them would be found of this nature. And *humble belief* has been judg'd too ſluggiſh and dull an exerciſe for men of acute parts, and therefore they would not take *faith's word* that ſo it is, unleſs *reaſon* will be her *ſurety*, and ſhew them how; but ſure it had been much for the *peace* of the Church and *ſafety* of Souls, if Myſteries had been permitted to be *Myſteries*; that thoſe ſublimer parts of our *faith* had been entertain'd with more veneration, and leſs of *diſquiſition*, and that while even the learned'ſt do acknowledge them to be *Abyſſes*, they would not confute that confeſſion, by attempting to *fathom* them. But alas, ſo prepoſterous has been the procedure, that thoſe things which were indeed inexplicable, have been rackt and tortur'd to diſcover themſelves, while in the mean time, the plainer, and more acceſſible *truths*, as if deſpicable while eaſie, are clouded and obſcur'd; ſo many ſubtile *queries* rais'd about them, that the *Theorick* of Chriſtianity is become harder than the *Practick*; a Grace is much more readily acquir'd than defin'd, and that *key of knowledge* which ſhould give us entrance into the cloſets and receſſes of religion, is by ſo much tampering and wrenching made *uſeleſs*; ſerves only to buſie us at the door, and ſo in effect proves rather a *bar to keep* us *out*, than a *key to let* us *in*. Thus perverſe are the *contradictions* of humane deprav'd nature; which like our *firſt Parents* take it unkindly, that God has reſerv'd any thing from us, and boldly attempt to break down his *encloſures*, to rob him of his *peculiar*; and yet in the mean time, as induſtriouſly contrive to rob our ſelves of our own, by cancelling both parts of Gods diſtribution, neither leaving *ſecret things to the Lord our God*, nor *the revealed ones to us and our children*, *Deut.* 29. 29. Certainly the firſt propagators of our Faith, proceeded at another rate; they well knew that not the *brain* but the *heart* was the proper *Soil* for that celeſtial Plant, and therefore did not

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amuſe their *Proſelytes* with curious queſtions, but ſet them to the active part of their religion. We ſee what brief and plain inſtructions S. *Peter* gives his *Catechumeni*, Acts 2.38. *Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remiſſion of ſins:* And this it ſeems as a full preparation for the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, which he there promiſes upon theſe only conditions. This was that vigorous Seed which at once *ſprung up* ſuddenly, and *rooted deep* too, and produc'd the liberal harveſt of that day: But ſure had thoſe three thouſand Souls been Catechiz'd by our modern *Caſuiſts*, we had ſeen a wide difference, not only in the expedition but ſucceſs. In like manner we ſee *Acts* 8. how ſhort a Creed qualified in S. *Philip*'s judgment for the Eunuchs baptiſm: And we find S. *Paul* whoſe education enabled him for the ſubtileſt definitions, yet delivers his whole doctrine in this *compendium*, Acts 20. 21. *Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and 'tis obſervable how he introduces this with a profeſſion that *he had kept back nothing that was profitable for them*, Verſe 20. and ſeconds it, Verſe 27. with another, that *he had not ſhunned to declare unto them the whole counſel of God*; from whence 'tis obvious for the ſhalloweſt diſcourſer to infer, that the whole counſel of God as far as it is incumbent for man to know, at leaſt *neceſſitate medii*, is compriz'd in that one Breviat of Evangelical truth: And certainly whilſt all the *diviſion* of theſe generals, was the diſtributing them into *practice*, they were found moſt fertile ſeminaries of all Vertue; but when they came to be *dichotomiz'd*, and canton'd out into curious aerial notions, they loſt their *prolifick* nature: That fruitful land became a wilderneſs, a wild and intricate maze, where men ſooner loſe *themſelves*, than find either *truth* or *holineſs*.

11. When Chriſtianity firſt atteſted it ſelf by *miracles*, it produced in the hearts of its converts, a firm aſſent to the truth of the *Doctrine*, and an awful reverence and adoration of *that God*, who had given ſuch power unto men, awaking them to an Enquiry after *duty*, ſo to propitiate that *omnipotence* whoſe fury it appear'd impoſſible to bear: And this ſure was a much more *genuine effect*, than if they had buſied themſelves in thoſe many *unprofitable curioſities*, nice, yet bold enquiries into the divine attributes which now a-days ſerve only to ſupplant that pious veneration we owe to them.

Primitive Chriſtians deſir'd rather to believe and adore, than contend and diſpute about their duty.

12. In like manner the comprehenſive enunciation of *Chriſt*, *Mar.* 16. 16. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damn'd*, was received by the firſt Chriſtians, as the condition on which the two ſo diſtant ſtates of Salvation or Damnation depended, and accordingly excited their diligence, to attain the *one*, and avoid the *other*. And this certainly was a much more concerning employment, than to have entertained themſelves with the modern diſpute, whether ſome antecedent decree of God had not irreverſibly determin'd them to the one or other; a *diſquiſition* that has ſerv'd only to keep us *Idly buſie*, ſet our heads a working, but folds up our *hands* like *Solomon*'s ſluggard in our boſoms. So alſo when S. *Paul* affirms it the deſign of *Chriſts giving himſelf for us, to puriſie to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; the *Primitive* Chriſtians had no other deſign than to comport with that his purpoſe; to be what he died to make them, and to atteſt their *Zeal* to good works, by being actually *rich* in them. They took *Chriſt*'s word, that *he that gave the meaneſt dole for his ſake, ſhould not loſe his reward*; thought themſelves ſure enough upon his promiſe, and never diſputed the proportion either of Worth or Congruity between the work and wages; and had the *Modern* done the like, our *works* had not ſo unhappily evaporated into *words*; we had talkt leſs and done more.

13. 'Twere

The multiplying of Creeds and Opinions hath divided the Faith and decay'd the life of Religion.

13. 'Twere eaſie to draw the Parallel through all the points which bu-ſied the devotion of the *firſt* Ages, and the curioſity of the *latter*: By all which it would be evident, how much Chriſtian doctrine has *loſt* in its Efficacy, ſince it *gain'd* in its Bulk; how we have embaſed our *Coin* by multiplying it; and have divided our *ſumm* into ſo many, and ſo ſmall Fractions, as our *Arithmetick* can ſcarce *number*, never *unite*. We ſhould think him very ridiculous, that ſhould hope to advance his *crop*, by grinding the *corn* he ſows; yet, methinks, this has been the Method of our Spiritual husbandmen, who have ſcarce ſuffered one grain of our faith to eſcape Entire. 'Tis ſaid that the *Ant*, when ſhe lays in her winter ſtock, bites the ends of the *Corn*, as being *Naturaliſt* enough to know that will certainly prevent its ſprouting. And ſure that little contemptible creature whom *Solomon* appoints to preach *induſtry* to the *ſluggard*, may in this point read *Philoſophy* too, to our greateſt *Doctors*; convince them that the ſeed which they mangle with ſo many Diſtinctions and Diviſions, will never ſpring up into Chriſtian *practice*: It will rather be like the *Dragons* teeth, *Cadmus* is ſaid to have ſown, whoſe immediate production was a *hoſtile band* combating one another. A *fable*, which, God knows, we have found too ſadly *moraliz'd* in our School-contentions, only with this unhappy difference, that ours are more *immortal*; our *Serpentine* breed fight but never die, oppoſe but deſtroy not one another.

The Church is over-run with Schiſm and Contention,

14. And then 'twill not appear ſtrange to ſee the firſt ſeeds of diſcord ſo prodigiouſly encreas'd, that they now over-ſpread the face of the Earth: for, whereas in all other things there is a ſucceſſion, one generation goes and another comes, and ſo though the *ſpecies* continue, the *Individuals* periſh; theſe ſeem to have the accurſt Priviledge of propagating and not expiring; and to have reconcil'd the procreativeneſs of *corporeal*, with the duration of *incorporeal* Subſtances: This is ſuch an advantage toward their *multiplication*, that we may grieve, but cannot wonder to find them *ſwarm*; not like *Bees* to bring profit, but like *Locuſts* to devour every green thing in the land; nor is it now in the power of all the *Magicians of Egypt* to caſt them out: For were it poſſible ever to become *Satans* intereſt to ſuppreſs them, he would certainly find himſelf in the caſe of one of his young Conjurers, to have *rais'd* more Spirits than he could *lay*. Mens now *irritated Paſſions*, and formed intereſts, the great fomenters of diſputes would prove too *ſturdy Devils*, even for *Beelzebub* himſelf to Exorciſe.

which is now kept up in ſmaller and leſſer matters.

15. But 'tis too ſure his Kingdom will never ſo divide againſt it ſelf; it ſuits not only with his *Nature*, but with his *Ends* to perpetuate our Strifes, and therefore as if our doctrinal debates were not enough to ſecure his purpoſe, he has an auxiliary troop of ritual differences to attach us. The *Leproſie* which infeſts the ſolider parts of our Religion, has paſt from the *Body* to the very *Garments*; the moſt exterior *adherencies*, Habits, Geſtures, Days, every thing that has but the remoteſt ſubſerviency to Piety, are become the *objects* of fierce Conteſts, and have ſo encreas'd the number and heat of our quarrels, that 'tis unneceſſary, perhaps impoſſible to add more; if he can but keep up theſe, as God knows, he is too like to do, his Kingdom will be competently guarded, they being his greateſt *ſecurity* againſt that *power of Godlineſs*, that vital force of Chriſtianity, he ſo much dreads: That they are ſo, is obvious enough to him that takes but the groſſeſt confus'd view of them. But that we may better diſcern the degrees of his *advantage* and our own *miſchief*, 'twill not be amiſs to conſider them more attentively, make ſome diſtinct obſervations, not of *all*, for that were endleſs, but of *ſome* of their moſt eminent *Effects*, which we ſhall find

find ſo pernicious and deſtructive, as ſufficiently ſpeak their relation, and ſubſerviency to the great *Abaddon.*

16. And in the firſt place, if we conſider them only *privatively*, as they ſupplant and juſtle out our greater concerns, we ſhall find them ſadly miſchievous, indeed to ſuch a degree, that were they not chargeable with any *poſitive* ill, they were by this their mere *negative* Force, competent Inſtruments of our *ruine.* Did they actually convey no venome, yet while they ſubſtract our nouriſhment, their effects will be ſure to be deadly; *Grace* as well as *Nature* being liable to be ſtarv'd as well as poyſoned. *Chriſtianity* is not a dull unactive, but ſtirring buſie State, and therefore we ſtill find it in the *Goſpel* repreſented under the *Metaphors* which imply the greateſt Induſtry and Activity; 'tis a *trade*, a *watch*, a *race*, a *combat*, and it aſſigns us tasks enough to juſtifie the propriety of the *Tropes:* And therefore as on the one hand, the ſleepy Profeſſor will at laſt find he has but dreamt of thoſe glorious Rewards he expects; ſo on the other, he that frames himſelf another *Scheme*, that labours, but not in Gods vineyard, that buſies himſelf in things extrinſick to that one great *Sphere of motion*, the Evangelical Precepts, will finally diſcern that he has but rolled *Syſiphus* his ſtone, eſpous'd a *toil* under which he may indeed be *weary* and heavy *laden*, but will never find *reſt* to his Soul.

Contention about things Indifferent makes us backward to thoſe that are of greater concern;

17. And then what can be more perfectly adapted to his aim, who deſires to propagate his own eternal reſtleſneſs unto us, than thus to commute our tasks, exchange theſe *pleaſant and gainful ones*, which God aſſigns us, for thoſe *uneaſie* and *fruitleſs*, we impoſe on our ſelves? 'Tis true, we find too many of thoſe unprofitable works of darkneſs to buſie and employ us: But I think no one, nay, I am apt to ſay not all others together, have proved ſo effectual to his purpoſe as this of raiſing and maintaining *parties in Religion.* 'Tis too uſual a policy of States to ſecure themſelves from the *fear* of a potent Neighbour, by fomenting a civil *diſcord* in his Kingdom: *Satan* has in this inſtance found it a lucky Stratagem, it having proved the moſt powerful revulſive of his danger. I will not examine, whether he borrowed it from, or lent it to our *Machiavilians*, but ſure he may from his own experience recommend it with the atteſtation of a *Probatum eſt.*

which is the Devils policy to keep up our Differences and Diviſions.

18. Indeed this art of diverſion gives him a full ſecurity againſt all he fears in our Chriſtianity, for 'tis not the title he envies to us, or dreads himſelf; we know he long ſince had courage to contemn the name even of Chriſt, when invoked by thoſe whoſe practices joyn'd with him in defying it; while we are but *Jewiſh Exorciſts*, make no other uſe of Chriſt, but to get us a reputation and a trade, he can deal well enough with us. *Seven Sons of Sceva* are not half ſo terrible to him as *one* S. *Paul*; 'tis him only he fears, that to the *form* has joyn'd *the power of Godlineſs:* That *Exorciſm* he knows he cannot reſiſt, and therefore has very dexterouſly found a way to divert it, by engaging us in thoſe contentions which allow us not to think of the practical part of our profeſſion: By the *confus'd noiſe* of Battel, quite drowning that *voice behind us*, which ſays, *This is the way, walk in it.* Nay, by this ſubtilty he does not only divert, but foreſtal alſo; like the *Philiſtines*, allows no Spear or Sword that may be us'd *againſt him*, but takes up all thoſe Inſtruments by which we ſhould work the *work of God.* We know to all affairs of Importance there are three neceſſary *concurrents*, without which they can never be diſpatcht; *Time*, *Induſtry*, and *Faculties:* And the more weighty and difficult the buſineſs is, the greater Degree of each of theſe is requiſite. Now certainly the *intereſt* of

Our Diſputes in Religion divert us from minding the Great buſineſſes of our Souls.

our Souls is not the slighteſt *concern* we have: The avoiding eternal *misery*, the acquiring endleſs *bliſs* is not ſo trivial, or ſo eaſie a matter, as to be the Work of a *moment*, the purchace of ſome few *yawning wiſhes*, or *volatile fancies*: He who is to diſpenſe the Rewards, has propos'd us other Conditions, aſſign'd us Work which takes up no leſs *time* than that of our *whole lives*; no leſs *intention* than of our *whole powers*: And then if we ſuffer any thing elſe to interpoſe, and defaulk what is thus entirely requiſite; if we cut new *Channels* for that which ſhould run in this one *full current*, 'tis eaſie to divine what the event will be: For man being finite both in his nature and operations, the time and attention he beſtows on one thing, muſt neceſſarily be ſubſtracted from another. And therefore if our Diſputes about Religion entertain and buſie us, they muſt unavoidably interrupt our attendance on practick Duties; and ſo whilſt we quarrel with *one another*, give our great *Maſter* too juſt ground of quarrel with *us all*, by neglecting the great, and indeed only Buſineſs entruſted to us.

Our diſputes rob us of too much of our precious time,

19. Now indeed that our contentions do thus divert us, is too apparent to any that ſhall conſider it in any of the three forementioned particulars; for, firſt for our *time*, they do not only *inſenſibly* ſteal away much of it (a modeſty which moſt other diverſions do ſtill retain) but *Magiſterially* exact it, and accordingly have large parcels of it ſolemnly and avowedly devoted to them; the *ſcanning old queſtions*, and *raiſing new ones*, having been the profeſt Buſineſs of many mens lives; their very Vocation and Trade wherein they have arrived to ſuch *eminence*, as ſhews they made *liberal oblations* of their Time to it: And of this every age has left ſo many Records, as the mere reading them would allow few vacant minutes to the ſucceeding: And had not *time* a little reveng'd his own quarrel, and conſum'd many of thoſe *writings*, by which himſelf was waſted, the *Hyperbole* would not be very extravagant in this caſe, which we find warrantably us'd in another, *John* 21. that even *the world it ſelf could not contain the Books which have been written.* As it is, there are more than enough to employ, nay, devour *time*; for when men once launch into the vaſt *Sea* of Controverſie, they are toſſed there endleſly, and ſeldom recover a *harbour*, Difficulties like *waves* crouding one upon the neck of another; And accordingly we ſee in *Polemick Diſputes*, how every rejoynder ſwells bigger and bigger, till like the Prophets *cloud*, from a *hand-breadth* it over-ſpread the *Heavens*; every little Manual becomes the Parent of vaſt Volumes; and unleſs the evil cure it ſelf by majoration; unleſs the greatneſs of the task bring in deſpair to ſupplant curioſity, and keep men from reading, the *ſpectators* will have as little reſpite, as the *Combatants*; both Writers and Readers will be ſo engroſt, that they will have little leiſure for any thing elſe. And I dare in this appeal to any that have engag'd deep either way, whether they have not found it experimentally true: I wiſh they would but ſnatch ſome broken parcel as a *plank* from the common *ſhipwrack* of their time; reſcue a few minutes for a ſober reflection, and audit what real Profit accrues to them from the expence of ſo many precious Hours; how much it advances that grand buſineſs for which their Time *here* was allotted, and according to which their Eternity *hereafter* will be awarded: always remembring, that if it promote it not, it hinders it, by diverting that *time* which ſhould have been ſo employed: And indeed there cannot be a more comprehenſive *miſchief* than this of the *loſs of time*, it being that which virtually contains the fruſtrating of all other Advantages, whereby we ſhould work out our Salvation. The operations even of *Chriſt* himſelf were, he tells us, limited to a certain ſeaſon: *I muſt work the work of my Father*

Father whilſt it is day, the night cometh when no man can work; and if the Night overtake us, it matters not how we are ſtored with inſtruments of Action, ſince they all at once then become uſeleſs. Our Laws anciently ſet a greater *peralty* upon the ſtealing *Beaſts of breed*, than on other Cattel of the *ſame ſpecies*, as calculating the damage by the poſſibilities of which the owner was robb'd. Time is the *univerſal womb* of things and actions; and therefore when we loſe *that*, we ſuffer an accumulative prejudice, forfeit our *Rights in reverſion*, as well as our *Poſſeſſions*, our *capacities*, as well as *enjoyments*. As in an Abortion the unhappy Mother, beſides the fruſtration of her hopes, and child-birth pains ſuſtain'd, acquires an aptitude to miſcarry for the future, and never to be able to bring forth a vital birth: And thus, God knows, multitudes of *Embryon*-purpoſes periſh, and the miſery of it is, they are our beſt that do ſo. We generally purſue our *frivolous projects* with an *active vigour*, but keep our great and concerning *affairs* only in deſign till *death* come and ſurprize us, which like the *fatal Metamorphoſes* the Poets talk of, fixes us in the poſture it finds us, and ſo preſents us to *Judgment*. Now I would know of the moſt eager Contender, whether he would not chuſe then to be found with his hands ſtrecht out in *prayer* to God, or *alms* to the poor, rather than dealing *blows* amongſt his fellow ſervants; if he would, certainly 'tis his concern to put himſelf into that form he would then appear in, to husband his little ſpan of time ſo, as may ſtand him in ſtead when time ſhall be no more.

20. But if men will needs be *improvident*, yet why will they be *ridiculous* too? If they will barter away their time, methinks they ſhould at leaſt have ſome eaſe in exchange, but to be induſtrious ill husbands, to loſe all their *advantages*, and none of their *toil*, is ſuch a ſolemn piece of folly, as is at once matter of Scorn and Wonder; yet this is the very caſe here; our *wranglings* do not only exhauſt our *time* but our *ſtrength* too: We purſue them with ſo vehement an intention, as if our Faith propos'd not to us any other victory, but over this ſort of Opponents: We run our ſelves breathleſs in this *race*, where the *prize* is only a few *fading Leaves*, or what is more tranſitory, a little *popular applauſe*; and make not towards the incorruptible Crown, till we are grown too feeble and decrepit for the other purſuit. Men macerate their Bodies, and waſte their Spirits in *Polemick ſtudies*, preſcribe themſelves no time of diſcharge from that *War*, till they are able no longer to wield their *weapons*, and then, when mere Impotence makes them *peaceable*, begin to cry out of *contention*, ſnatch up *Devotion* when Controverſie begins to be too heavy for them, and at their Death *pray for that peace* of the Church, which they have made it the buſineſs of their life to *diſturb*. This as it ſufficiently atteſts what mens thoughts are in their cool bloud, what apprehenſions they have of the way when they draw near their journeys End; ſo does it abundantly evince the unſpeakable prejudice Piety receives from our Diſputes; Thoſe have the active and *vigorous Abettors*, while That is turn'd off to languiſhing *bed-rid Votaries*. So that the *diviſion* between theſe two, is like that of the *Cattel* between *Jacob* and *Laban*, all the ſtronger to the one, and feebler to the other: Would God the ſcene were not in one reſpect chang'd, and that the *Syrian* had not here got the better ſhare. But in the mean time what greater advantage can *Satan* wiſh for, our ſtrength and induſtry is diverted upon theſe foreign expeditions, and *Sion* is left to be guarded by the lame and the blind, ſuch only as are not able to follow the Camp, and then 'tis not ſtrange to ſee what ſucceſsful aſſaults he has made, that that true *practick virtue* which once made ſuch victorious ſalleys

and miſſpend moſt of our ſtrength and Induſtry.

on the heathen World, is now baffled in its own Quarters, beaten from its Works, and driven to ſeek ſhelter in obſcure corners, immures it ſelf in ſome few private breaſts, and ſo like an exil'd Prince, makes only ſhift to *live*, when it ſhould *reign*. But alas, ſhall we for ever ſuffer our ſelves to be thus befool'd, ſhall this his ſtale ſtratagem after ſo many hundred years uſe, nay, and detection too, loſe nothing of its Efficacy? Muſt we always waſte our ſtrength in forging ſhackles for our ſelves? This is ſuch an infatuation as *Hoſea* ſpeaks of, *Chap. 9. 7. The Prophet is a fool, the Spiritual man is mad:* Would God, we would once put our ſelves under the diſcipline of ſerious recollection, it might perhaps cure the Phrenſie: Let him who has with unwearied diligence watcht all advantage againſt his *Antagoniſt*; rack'd and tortured every period of his diſcourſe, to make it confeſs an abſurdity: Let him, I ſay, conſider, how much better that *Induſtry* had been employed in diſcovering the *fallacies* of our common Adverſary, that old Sophiſter, who puts the moſt *abuſive Elenchs* on us, whilſt we are moſt buſie in putting them one upon another. Good God! how might true vital Chriſtianity at this day have flouriſht, if we would have beſtowed our pains the right way? At how much a cheaper rate might we have *cheriſht*, than we *deſtroy* her? All parties pretend to be very careful of this *Vine*, are very buſie in ſetting traps for the *little Foxes*, all whom they are pleaſed to call *Hereticks*; and in the mean time take no care of the *wild Boar*, let that not only ſpoil her *branches*, but ſtock up her *roots*, ſuffer the moſt ſavage beſtial vices to deſtroy both Power and Form of Godlineſs together. Thus unhappily do we divert our intentions from our moſt important concerns. And as *Archimedes* is ſaid to have been ſo vehemently intent upon a *Geometrical figure*, that he heard not of the taking of the City, till an Enemy gave him his *information* and *death* together: So do we ſo buſie our ſelves in drawing our ſeveral *Schemes* of Religion (every of which will pretend to no leſs than *Demonſtration*) that in the mean time, that which alone is *true Religion*, is expos'd to the fury of the Enemy, ſack'd, ruinated, and like the plough'd up *Jewiſh Sanctuary*, not one ſtone left upon another. Certainly moſt of the *queſtions* which at this day diſturb Chriſtendom, have *in reſpect of their matter* no Propriety toward the propagating good Life, but, *in reference to their way of managery*, all aptneſs to hinder it; how much were it then for our *eaſe* as well as *profit*, to turn us into the plain road, where none of theſe Thorny difficulties will encumber us? Alas, why ſhould the *Romaniſt* ſo ſweat to maintain his *Purgatory flame*, as if he already felt its heat, and would in this world antedate thoſe pains, when the ſame Induſtry beſtowed here to *puriſie himſelf from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, would ſubſtract the matter of that *Fire*, and leave little for that *furnace* to refine; which were doubtleſs a much ſecurer way, even according to his *own principles*, than to truſt to the uncertain devotion of *others*, to fetch him out when once deeply ingulpht: 'Tis ſurely much better to ſtarve that Fire by ones own *innocence*, than to leave it to be extinguiſht by the Tears and Piety of *ſurviving friends*. Why ſhould the *Socinian* ſo eagerly contend for the poſſibility of keeping the Law, when *one example* would convince more than a *thouſand arguments*. Let him bend his ſtudy to make himſelf an inſtance of his own doctrine; and then though he do finally fail in proving his *Hypotheſis*, yet, if he do his utmoſt, he will not fail of a better *triumph* than that which the Schools can give: And ſo will even from his error extract advantage, his very *ſtraying* will by a happy *Antiperiſtaſis*, lead him into the *way*. Why does the *Predeſtinarian* ſo adventurouſly climb into Heaven, to ranſack the celeſtial *Archives*, read

Gods

Gods *hidden Decrees*, when with leſs labour he may ſecure an *Authentick tranſcript* within himſelf; let him according to S. *Peter*'s advice, *Add to his faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance*, &c. and that chain of virtues will ſtand him in much more ſtead, than if he could as infallibly (as ſome have confidently) demonſtrate every link of *Predeſtination*: 'Tis the aſſiduous *practice* of Duty will make his calling and election ſure; and unleſs he can confute that divine *Axiome*, that *without holineſs none ſhall ſee the Lord*; he cannot but confeſs he may more profitably buſie his thoughts in labouring to become holy, than in diſputing whether he can chuſe to be ſo or not. Or laſtly, why do we *Chriſtians of ſeveral perſwaſions*, ſo fiercely argue againſt the *ſalvability* of each other, as if it were not only our Opinion, but our Intereſt and our Wiſh, *that all ſhould be damn'd, but thoſe of our particular Sect*; when God knows, not only every Society, but every ſingle perſon has enough to do, to *work out his own ſalvation*, which if we will take the *Apoſtles* word, is to be done *with fear and trembling*, *Phil.* 2. 12. A temper very widely diſtant from that of cenſuring and judging. And ſure we ſhould not think that *malefactor* more meriting, or more likely to be acquitted, who ſhould leap from the *Bar* to the *Bench*, and there condemn the whole Gaol but himſelf. 'Twas a ſober and Chriſtian *reply* of a late learned Gentleman, who being askt by one whether a *Papiſt* might be ſaved, anſwered, *You may be ſaved without knowing that.* And would we confine our cares and enquiries to thoſe things which concern that one great Intereſt, we might take *leſs pains*, and yet do *more work*; be leſs *buſie-bodies*, but more *fruitful Chriſtians*, and then ſure 'tis time we ask our ſelves the *Wiſe-mans* queſtion, *Eccleſ.* 5. 16. *What profit hath he that laboureth for the wind?* And at laſt give over this unthriving diligence, and not ſo emulate the moſt ſtupid of Beaſts, as to make our ſelves burthens, only that we may couch under them.

and miſ-employ the great parts and abilities of the more knowing and learned.

21. And were this only *Iſſachars* lot, 'twere the leſs to be regretted, but alſo *Zabulon* herein invades his portion; 'tis they that handle the *pen of the Writer*, that have engroſt *this error*, and will not ſuffer it to be a *Plebeian* one. None do ſo much this way miſ-employ the two vulgar talents of Time and Induſtry, as thoſe who have a third ſuperadded to them, that of Extraordinary Faculties and endowments, which they do as prodigally laviſh as either of the former. The Beginners or Abettors of *contentions* have generally been Perſons of the moſt *acute refined wits* and *excellent learning*, which has enabled them for thoſe quirks and ſubtilties, of which groſſer underſtandings would have remain'd more happily ignorant. A ſtrange production, that the *greateſt beauties* of Nature and Art, ſhould ingender the *fouleſt deformity* in Religion. Thus alas, have *Satans* altars the pre-emption of *Gods*, the fatteſt Oblation brought to feed the fire of *contention*, whilſt that of *devotion* expires for want of Nouriſhment. It was indeed no wonder, that the blind zeal of *Pagans* had made him ſo wantonly nice, that none but the choiceſt victims would ſerve his turn; none but an *Andromeda* and an *Iphigenia*, Royal and Virgin-ſacrifices propitiate his infernal Deities: But that among *Chriſtians* he ſhould ſtill have the *ſame Election*, have the richeſt treaſures of thoſe, who ſay they war againſt him, laid at his feet, have his choiceſt weapons out of his Enemies magazine, is a riddle that can ſcarce be ſolved, but by concluding *Idolatry* has only chang'd its *form*, and that he ſits as ſecurely enſhrin'd in *mens paſſions* and animoſities, as ever he did in an *Idol Temple*; ſo that he ſeems rather to have loſt the *pomp*, than the *power* of Regiment. But admit, that he were not herein ſo immediately Gods rival, that theſe *ſpeculative debates* had none

none of those adherencies, which do so directly gratifie him, yet still he is secur'd of gaining somewhat at rebound; for alas, when mens faculties are thus employed, what Weapons are there left for the defence of true *practick vertue*, and God knows, she needs them but too much: Mens *lusts* are grown subtle Disputants, so that the most improved *reason* may find work enough to manage the Contest; And surely would men of parts timely have bent their endeavours this way, vice could not have got so strong a party. Men are ashamed to be *Proselytes* to a weak Arguer, as thinking they must part with their *reputation*, as well as their *sin*: And certainly nothing is a more general *discouragement* from Piety, than the *opinion of its Votaries* not being Persons of Parts, and exalted Understandings; a Prejudice as old as the time of our *Saviour*, as may appear from *Joh.* 7. Would God our greatest *Rabbies* would sadly consider how much they have contributed to this scandal, while by laying out their parts on *Polemick niceties*, they have neglected the more weighty part of their business, and given too much Attestation to that scandalous Maxim, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*: Certainly this is quite to mistake their *Commission*, which is not that of a *Herauld*, to proclaim War amongst men, but that of an *Embassador*, to reconcile them first to holiness, and by it to God: And doubtless *one soul* gain'd to Piety, would more promote their account, than *many thousands* secured to a Sect or Party. We find how sad the doom was of that Servant who wrapt up his Talent, but we have no cause to think it would have been at all easier, if he had melted the Talent into Bullets, to maintain the skirmish with his fellows: Whether that be not the case of some who have received not the *one* Talent but the *five*, I leave it to be discussed between God and their own Consciences; but in the *interim* 'tis sad to see how unhappily men engage their endeavours, which seems to represent the reverse of *Esay*'s *Prophecy*, we have beat our ploughshares into swords, and our pruning-hooks into spears, all the instruments of fertility and growth in *Grace*, into Engins of *War* and *discord*; and then it must needs be a most deplorable condition to which Christianity is reduced; which seems in this to be under the same calamity, which her distrest professors suffer from the *Turkish* tyranny, whilst her hopefullest and most pregnant Children, are like *Janizaries* and *Timariots* trained up to fight against her. And let none wonder that I call it fighting against her, when yet perhaps none of them do formally renounce her; for that Circumstance only determines the War to be *intestine*, not *foreign*; and if our own sad Experiences had not too much qualified us to judge, I might appeal to the universal vote of mankind, which of those were the most destructive. Indeed were there no other act of hostility discernable, but that which we have hitherto insisted on, the intercepting her supplies, the cutting off from her that time, industry and gifts, whereby she would be nourisht and supported, that were irreparably injurious to her, and consequently most grateful to that grand *Enemy*, who, as hath been shew'd, makes advantage of our Wranglings, or Dissentions *with one another*, to reck his more inveterate Malice *on us all*.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Diſputes, as they ſupplant Charity.

1. BUT alas, the miſchief of theſe debates can never be deſcrib'd by bare *negatives*, there are multitudes of *poſitive* ills, that inſeparably adhere to them, and thoſe of ſo deſtructive a force, that if Chriſtianity were *beleaguered* and *famiſht* by the former, ſhe is *ſtorm'd* and *batter'd* by theſe, and ſo is aſcertain'd to ſink under all the methods of ruine. In the front of theſe we may well rank thoſe diſplacencies and animoſities which are the product of our ſpeculative differences, and which do indeed ſo naturally reſult from them, that 'tis not to be hoped ſo long as the *one* continues, that the *other* will ever ceaſe. For though in *practice* we often ſee a bewitching Sin dethrone the Reaſon, and make men act as if they had no ſuch ſuperior principle to guide them, yet in matters of *Speculation* their *affections* are generally ſtrongly influenc'd by their *underſtandings*. We do not only approve, but love thoſe notions wherewith we are prepoſſeſt, which kindneſs as it propagates it ſelf to the *abettors* of the ſame Tenets, ſo alſo it inſinuates diſlikes to the *oppoſers*. And as that oppoſition advances, ſo the diſguſt does too, till at laſt the Scene ſhifts, and the *Perſons* are at a greater war than the *Opinions*. But we need not thus derive a proof from the *cauſes*, when the thing does too demonſtrably atteſt it ſelf by the *effects*; for what iſſues are there of the mortalleſt hatred, which do not plentifully flow from this fountain? *Humane nature* we know has but three ways of actuating its paſſions; by *thought*, by *word*, and by *deeds*; and we may ſurely conclude the feud very bitter that employs all theſe Engines, as 'tis too viſible this does; for though the *former* of theſe be in its own nature inſcrutable to all but Omniſcience; yet the *two latter* are, according to *Chriſts* own Rule, of the *Tree by its fruits*, infallible *Criterions* of them; and thoſe make ſuch liberal diſcoveries, that I think I may appeal to any who have eſpous'd a *party*, whether they have not with the firſt diſcriminating rudiments of their own Sect, imbib'd a ſecret *confus'd prejudice* to all others. Nay, I fear there are but few of ſo mortified paſſions, as to have ſtopt there, and not advanc'd to a direct averſion, and alienation of mind. Indeed were it not for this, 'twere ſcarce poſſible for ſo many of the *vulgar*, to be ſuch *Bigots* in their ſeveral factions; for alas, their Intellects are generally too *groſs*, to have any *clear* apprehenſion of the Points they contend for; their Leaders only give them ſome *general confus'd notions*, juſt enough to excite their *diſpleaſure* againſt all Diſſenters, and then their *anger* muſt preſently be call'd *zeal*, and inſtead of the more uneaſie task of ſuppreſſing their paſſion, this expedient ſerves at once to hallow and gratifie it: Nay, ſo ridiculous have ſome mens prepoſſeſſions of this kind been, that they would ſcarce allow thoſe to be *entire men* whom they thought not *ſound believers*, but have fanſied I know not what *bodily* as well as *Mental* Monſtroſities in thoſe they were pleas'd to call *Hereticks*; a piece of childiſh credulity which the emiſſaries of ſome factions have not diſdain'd to make their advantage of. But theſe inward diſguſts and rancours are but the firſt bound of this ball of contention, when this leven is once in the *heart*, it will quickly diffuſe it ſelf, and both *tongue* and *hands* will be tainted with it. Hence comes it, that diſputes in religion are managed with ſuch virulency and bitterneſs, that one would think the Diſputants had put off much of *Humanity*, before they come thus to treat of *Divinity*.

Our Diſputes are a great obſtruction and hindrance to our Charity.

vinity. The government of the Tongue is a piece of morality which sober nature dictates, which yet in this instance many even of our greatest Scholars seem totally to have unlearnt; For whether we consider the unseemly reproaches, or rigid censures, wherewith almost all parties pursue their Antagonists, we have reason to say with S. *James*, *The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly Poyson:* Would God their *guilt* of this kind, did not so loudly proclaim it self, as to supersede the need of *proof.* 'Tis too obvious that the *Satyr* has usurpt the chair, and *Polemick Discourses* are degenerated into *libels* and *invectives*; our Controvertists fall from *arguments* to *reproaches*, as if their Zeal lay more to blast their adversaries *fame*, than confute his *error*; and were this only in personal extemporary debates, it might have the excuse of an indeliberate passion. Indeed it were to be wisht that all words of this sort might vanish in that breath that utters them; that as they resemble the Wind in *fury* and *impetuousness*, so they might do also in *transientness*, and *sudden expiration:* But alas, a course is taken to immortalize them, they become *records*, and our most elaborate *controversial writings*, like the Earth after the curse, over-run with these briers and thorns, Sarcasms, contumelies and invectives filling so many *Pages*, that were those weeded out, many *volumes* would be reduced to a more *moderate bulk* as well as *temper.* Nor are our *censures* any thing more modest than our *reproaches*, every petty difference is mutually upbraided to each party as a defection from the faith, so that we scarce know a milder *name* than Heresie, nor *doom*, than Damnation. And as if the visible obliquities of errors would not afford us indictments enough against one another, there is a closer inspection made, every *position* is ript up, and curiously dissected, to see what *Embryo* is in its womb, what seeds there are of monstrous productions, which though perhaps the native strength of the Principle would never have *animated*, yet the preternatural heat of an Antagonist can quickly *hatch* them (like the *Chickens* at *Grand Cairo*) into life, and vigorous being: And if by a long chain of (perhaps fallacious) Inferences, some such Imputation is fastned upon a *Thesis*, then all who embrace that, are charg'd also with all this *spurious brood*, though they never so solemnly renounce and disclaim them. A practice sure very uncharitable; for suppose such *consequences* never so regularly deduced from my *opinion*, yet so long as I seriously disavow and detest them, I may indeed be thought *unwise* in not discerning the connexion, but sure not *impious.* So that unless want of *Logick* be a *damning sin*, no man can hence be authoriz'd to pronounce me *reprobate:* And I cannot think that God, whose rigor bends against the faults of our *wills*, rather than our *understandings*, and who at the last great assize will assume our own Consciences into the Judicature upon us, will ever sentence me for those *deductions*, how horrid soever, which I never made mine, or that I shall ever find my self in Hell for a *misperswasion* which I never entertain'd. But there are some whose Censures are not so *artificial*, yet no less *severe*, who beg their *Postulata*, and taking it for granted that such and such are the only sanctified opinions, make them the *Shiboleth* by which to discriminate not only their *own* Friends, but *Gods* too, lock up Heaven gates against any who bring not that Ticket for admittance; and though they make the way wide enough to receive the most *over-grown Sinner* of their own Opinion, yet they pronounce it impossible to the *strictest piety* of a Dissenter. And upon such grounds as these do we mutually doom one another to perdition, never considering that whilst we so briskly presage *others* Damnation, we really prepare for our *own.* Alas, our eagerness to *heat the Furnace seven times hotter*

hotter for all that bow not to our dictates, does but expoſe us to the fate of *Nebuchadnezzars officers*, *Dan.* 3. to be our ſelves conſum'd in that flame, wherein we caſt them. 'Tis indeed to be wiſht we would ceaſe to invade Gods peculiar, by judging thoſe that muſt ſtand or fall to him: But if we will needs take his *office*, 'tis but equitable we take his *rules* too; and in our *Wrath* remember *Mercy:* But God be bleſſed, 'tis the Judgment of our *upright*, yet *gracious* Maſter, that ſhall finally determine us; and not that of our paſſionate fellow-ſervants: If theſe were irreverſible, and the Key of the bottomleſs pit were in our *cuſtody*, we might give Satan *a Writ of Eaſe*, diſcharge him from his perambulations, he would need no more to walk about as a *Lion*, but might ſtill lie in his *Den*, and we ſhould bring in *prey* enough to glut the Devourer: For could we *execute* all we *condemn*, we might ask the Diſciples queſtion, *Matth.* 19. 25. *Who then can be ſaved?* But as theſe ſevere *cenſures*, are a preſent *violation of Charity*, ſo they tend to the perpetuating it by obſtructing a return to that *unity of Judgment*, which might make up the very *original breach*; for while men reciprocally load each others opinions and perſons with deteſtable imputations, if they really ſpeak what they think, they do ſtill more deeply impreſs upon themſelves the prejudice to that which they accuſe, (*hatred* as well as *love* gathering ſtrength by being actuated:) but if they do indeed not believe their own *charge*, yet having once made it, either upon Intereſt or Paſſion, 'tis not probable they will want *pride* to maintain it; and when we conſider how ruling a *piece of carnality* that is, we cannot wonder if it indiſpoſe men to *retractations*. I wiſh we had not too many, and too late inſtances of ſome whoſe weightieſt *objection* againſt a cauſe, has been their own former *violence* againſt it. When men have once faſtned the brand of Hereſie, Profaneneſs or Blaſphemy upon an *opinion*, they think they cannot afterwards become its *Proſelytes*, without either ſeeming to *aſſume* thoſe Guilts, or at leaſt that of having *falſly charg'd* them upon others: And the Horns of ſuch a *Dilemma* do ſo gore their *reputation*, that it often tempts to ſalve that with the *wounding of Conſcience*, and perſwades them rather to reject their *convictions*, than expoſe their *credits*. And certainly were this the only ill conſequent of our rigorous accuſations, it would be enough to prejudice them as unfit Inſtruments in a Goſpel-deſign; but though they ſuit not with that work to which they ſolemnly *pretend*, they are moſt accommodate to that they really *produce:* For if we examine in the third place, what *influence* theſe our eager conteſts have upon our *actions*, we ſhall find them fully proportionable to our *words*. And firſt negatively, 'tis apparent in too many, that they are apt to confine even the common offices of humanity to their own Sect: And others who do not ſo, yet ſhew ſo great partiality in diſpenſing them, as diſcovers the Name of *Chriſtian* is not half ſo charming, as that of their own *particular Faction*. Were inſtances of this kind as *needful* as they are *numerous*, 'twere eaſie to give multitudes: But I think none that has liv'd in our late confuſions can have wanted occaſions of obſerving it in *others*, at leaſt, if not in *himſelf*. But alas, *omiſſions* are ſcarce worth our notice, when there are ſo many *poſitive Acts* of unkindneſs ſo viſible among us: They know little of *ancient*, and leſs of *modern* Times, that are unacquainted with the *mutual perſecutions*, which almoſt all parties have alternately rais'd one againſt another among Chriſtians: *Confiſcations* and *baniſhments*, *Gibbets* and *flames*; Weapons God knows much too carnal for a ſpiritual warfare, yet much more in uſe than thoſe S. *Paul* recommends to *Timothy*, *gentleneſs*, and *meek inſtructing of Oppoſers*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25, 26.

And when 'tis consider'd that those Opposers too were Heathens, 'twill be more than a little strange, that Severity should be allowable to *Brethren*, which was interdicted against *Aliens*. Is it an easier crime to reject the *entire body* of that Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, than to differ in the explication of some *one branch* of it? Nay, perhaps only of some *corollary* and *deduction* from it, which, as far as it is humane, may be fallible, and therefore can no more command my *assent* than it satisfies my *judgment*; yet this is generally the most that can be affirmed of our differences; For almost what Party is there which doth not avowedly own all that *Faith* which constituted the first *Christians?* Would God, we did as uniformly embrace the Charity too; and then most of our disputes would be superseded, at least so calm'd, that there should be none of those destructive effects which they now produce: For alas, how many funeral piles has this prepostrous zeal kindled! So that what some said of *Draco*'s Laws, may too justly be applied to our arguments, that they have been writ rather in *bloud* than *Ink*. But as Christ when he forewarn'd his Disciples of the ensuing persecution, tells them, not only they shall be kill'd, but they shall be put out of the Synagogue: So now as if Christians were emulous of every branch of *Jewish* cruelty, we transcribe that part of the copy too, and either by causless excommunicating *others*, or separating *our selves*, we deny the benefit of *publick communion* to each other: And this is a greater severity than the former, by how much more implacable our hate is against what we count *error*, than what we know to be vice; and by how much the concerns of the *Soul* are more estimable than those of the *Body*. The inveterateness of those Feuds which rise from Opinion, may clearly be discovered in this instance: Let a man have committed all the *outrages* which may render him unworthy to live; yet when we prosecute him to *death*, we willingly afford him all helps towards his *future state*, and no man is so inhumane as to refuse to pray, either *for* or *with* a Malefactor; yet some few *speculative differences* are such a gulph betwixt us, that we cannot meet even in that we all acknowledge our common Duty, *the worship of our God*. Certainly among all the accursed issues of our *contention*, there is none more malignant and criminal, than this of *Schism* and *Separation*, and would men judge dispassionately, more irrational too: For doubtless were our case stated to any sober Heathen, he would never be able to guess, why they who equally acknowledge the advantage and necessity of *prayer*, confess the same God, have the same common wants in this world, and hopes in the next, may not ask in the same *form* and in the same *place*. Alas, is it not enough to be at distance where we *differ*, but must we be so also where we *agree?* Is unity so dreadful to us, that we must act contradictions to escape it? Surely this is a *stranger fascination* of the spirit of Division, than that in the Gospel-*Demoniack*, which enabled him to break all bonds in sunder, and like it, abhors the approaches of a *Saviour*, crying out, *What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus the Son of God, art thou come to torment us?* Who knows what a powerful Exorcism the united intercessions of the Christian world might have been; had we joyntly deprecated quarrels, God might have found a way to have compos'd them, though we could not; and our *tears* might have cemented those breaches which our *dissents* made, but our *Separation* widens. I know the venerable names of the Sanctions of *Holy Church*, the hundred thirty seventh Canon of the Code of the universal Church, which says in expres terms, Ὅτι ὐ δεῖ αἱρετικοῖς ἢ σχισματοῖς συνεύχεσθαι, *that we ought not to pray with Hereticks or Schismaticks*, and very many warm expressions

expreſſions of the *Fathers* are producible in this caſe: But till we excommunicate with the Tears and Sorrows, and publick concernment of the primitive Chriſtians, who refus'd all acts of kindneſs only out of love, and the moſt ardent Charity, we may by no means lay claim to their pattern, whoſe eſtrangements only flow from malice and inveterate hate. Would we indeed comport with the Example of thoſe *happy Times*, we ſhould have fear'd the *guilt of Schiſm* in our ſelves ſo much, as not to have lightly charg'd it upon others; we ſhould have prayed for the *converſion* of Diſſenters, not laid *Anathemas* upon them, and prayed for their *confuſion*. S. *Paul*, we ſee, *Heb.* 10. 25. reckons the *forſaking of Aſſemblies*, as a degree, at leaſt preparative of *Apoſtaſie*; and from his time throughout all the purer ages of the Church the holy Fathers have generally branded it as the higheſt impiety; and no marvel, for it is one of thoſe Gyant-like ſins, which not only oppreſſes *men*, but invades even *God himſelf*. 'Tis the mangling and aſſaſſinating *that body* to which Chriſt owns an *inſeparable connexion*; the putting him to head ſcatter'd limbs, inſtead of an entire compact body, as if we meant to refute S. *Paul*, ſhew him 'tis poſſible that *Chriſt may be divided*. Good God! what ſhall we ſay when we ſee Heathen Souldiers eſtimate Chriſts *coat* higher than Chriſtians do his *body*: They thought the *one* too good to be parted, but we ceaſe not to tear and mangle the *other*, and which is yet more monſtrous, make it *a part of our Religion* to do ſo. We name our *Opinions* our *Faith*, and when under that Title we have enſhrin'd them, *we* make more barbarous Immolations than ever the moſt *ſavage Heathens* did. They ſacrifice ſome few objects of their Love, their *Children*, but we ſacrifice the very *affection*, and think our Zeal *lukewarm* till it have reduced our Charity to *aſhes*. And now if we compare theſe our *Diviſions*, *Wrath*, and *Bitterneſs*, with thoſe fundamental, Goſpel-precepts of *Unity*, *Love* and *Meekneſs*, we muſt ſurely ſay we have not there ſo learn'd Chriſt. And then how ridiculous is it, to pretend a Zeal to that Goſpel, whoſe very foundations we undermine? Peace is at once the *bleſſing* and *duty* of Chriſtians, and thoſe heats of *ſpeculative* Conteſts which violate it, will certainly never ſerve to make us either good or happy. And therefore till Charity ceaſe to be an Eſſential part of Chriſtianity (which certainly we muſt burn our Bibles ere we can ſuppoſe) we muſt conclude, that our Diſputes, and the ways whereby we manage them, how much ſoever they pretend to preſerve, do indeed evacuate and deſtroy true, that is, *Practick* Chriſtianity.

CHAP. XI.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Diſputes, as they engage upon Ill Arts and Scandalous Practices, to ſuſtain the eſpouſed Cauſe and Party.

1. AND yet ſo unhappily are many men miſtaken, that theſe *irregular heats* which thus waſte the vital ſpirits of Religion, are thought the moſt *Soveraign Cordials* to ſupport them. The higheſt *Paroxyſm* of this Fever is deem'd the perfecteſt *Health*. Men eſteem the overflowing of their *Gall*, the exuberance of their *Zeal*; and then all the Promiſes to the *faithful combatant* in Chriſts camp, they confidently appropriate to that their ſo *eminent Grace*; though indeed it can with no more propriety be call'd ſo, than *Pharaohs lean Kine* might be ſaid to be *fat*, becauſe they had devour'd thoſe that were ſo. In plain terms, men lay ſo great weight upon

Peoples zeal puts them upon ill practices to promote their opinions:

their being of right opinions, and their eagerness of abetting them, that they account *that* the *unum necessarium*, and think the propagating of those so *important a service* to God, as will justifie the use of the most *interdicted instruments*, legitimate the most *enormous Commissions*, that they can fansie contributive to that pious End: And moreover commute for the neglect of *Practick duties* in the general tract of their *lives*. I shall not here urge the hazard of mens erring in the choice of opinions, nay, the certainty that of many opposite one only can be the right; and then to all such as miss that, their very ground-work fails them. I shall only confine my self to the *malignant influence* this Perswasion has on *practice*, and in that respect I cannot but affirm it a most *pernicious deluſion*, which as it tends extremely to the enhansing the bitterness of our contests, so it may justly be reckoned among the worst effects of them, and is a most *irrefragable proof* how much they obstruct the vital *efficacy of Religion* in our hearts. Nor is it any new thing for men thus to deceive themselves; for we find such Confidences as these frequently upbraided to the *Jews*, both by the *Prophets* and *Christ* himself; they thought their *Zeal* to the Temple and ritual observances so invincibly meritorious, as no *Crime* could defeat, and that their *legal purifications* would render them acceptable in Gods Eyes, in spight of all their *Moral pollutions*: But how fallacious a hope this was, the many severe increpations of God do sufficiently attest. Yet certainly their guilt was far below ours; the things they so depended on were *parts*, though not the *whole* of their duty; those *Ordinances*, though perhaps somewhat *adulterated* by *Rabbinical* mixtures, yet for the main were *instituted* by God himself, and that with a design of discriminating and separating them from the rest of the world; and such peculiarities and priviledges as these, might have an aptness to excite that presumption: But alas, the case is otherwise with most of us; they are not the *Revelations* of Gods will, not the *Testament* of our dying Redeemer, but some *Codicils* and *Annexes* of our own we so earnestly abet. 'Tis not the *Text* (for then 'twere impossible for any that receiv'd the same Canon of Scripture to differ) but our *glosses* to which we pay such Reverence; and when on that account we *sever* our selves from those to whom the Commands of God, the Bloud of our Saviour have most closely *united* and *cemented* us; we can yet make a shift to think that there is so much of Sacred in this, as shall not only render it highly rewardable, but also hallow all other profanations of our lives; and in our *Jehu*-march upon such an expedition, can turn all regrets of conscience (like *Joramʃ* messengers) behind us. That this is so, none can doubt who observe with what boldness men rush upon the most *unchristian sins*, in pursuit of what they fansie a *Christian cause*. Were it not for this *amulet*, how were it possible for any to think they may venture upon Perjury, Sacriledge, Murder, Regicide, any thing without impeachment to their *Saintship*; nay, to think that the only danger lies on the other side, in being *remisly wicked*, that to *slack* any thing of the **utmost speed**, is *to do the work of the Lord negligently*. Yet that this has been a prevailing Perswasion, we have had too many, and too sad instances; and God grant we may not find them so repeated, that our *sense* may supersede the *use* of our memories concerning them; nor has this been peculiar to one only Sect; but those who are otherwise at the widest distance unite in this Principle. They are not only *Fanaticks* that can say *grace* over the foulest *crimes*, and consecrate them to the use of a *good cause*; if we examine the *Dypticks* either of Conclave or Consistory, we shall find some Saints upon that account, who could never have been so

upon

upon any other. And when we conſider how often *Heaven* has been mortgaged to gain Auxiliaries from *Hell*, how men have been encouraged to the moſt *damning ſins*, by *promiſes* of being certainly ſaved; we muſt either think that a *Holy cauſe* is omnipotent enough to reverſe *Gods decrees*, to *ſave* whom he would *damn*, or elſe that this pretence is one of the moſt ruinous deceits, the moſt fatal Treachery to Souls that ever *Satan* contriv'd, who though he do in all inſtances play the *Mountebank*, yet ſure never more than when on confidence of this *Antidote* he perſwades thus to ſwallow down his *deadlieſt poyſon*.

2. I muſt not here attempt to enumerate all the *unchriſtian practices*, that have on this ſcore been made, not only *lawful* but *meritorious*; yet there is one of ſo frequent uſe, that I muſt needs advert unto it, and that is, thoſe *calumnies* and *falſhoods*, which are now become a piece of *Eccleſiaſtick* as well as *State policy*, and a great part of that offenſive armour wherewith our controvertiſts aſſault one another. Indeed if we conſider how many *forges* are daily going for theſe *Engines*, we ſhall have reaſon to think, all Parties have an high eſteem of their *uſefulneſs*. Of theſe Calumnies there are too many ſorts and degrees to be here particulariz'd: And indeed thoſe, who permit themſelves to uſe any, can be ſuppos'd to have no other *boundaries* than the advantage of their *cauſe*: And accordingly as that ſeems to exact, they lay their *Scene*; ſometimes they traduce the perſons of their oppoſers, and by raiſing prejudices againſt them, hope ſome of it will reflect upon their doctrine: Did men generally know how to diſtinguiſh between *reports* and *certainties*, this *ſtratagem* would be as *unskilful* as it is *uningenuous*: But conſidering the vulgar temper, it's not unaptly ſuited to it. This it ſeems was anciently underſtood, it being the old Greek advice, Θαῤῥεῖν ἀπλῶς καὶ λάκνειν ταῖς διαβολαῖς, ὅτι κἂν τελέως ἴαται τὸ ἕλκος ὁ δεδηγμένος, ἀλλὰ μένει τὸ διαβολῆς. *To calumniate ſtoutly, for that how perfectly ſoever the wound of reproach be healed, there will remain a ſcar; and though we wipe away with never ſo much care the dirt thrown at us, there will be left ſome ſullidge behind*: And accordingly this was the Expedient the *Pagans* us'd againſt the *Primitive Chriſtians*, to put them thus in the skins of beaſts, and ſhapes of monſters, and then worry them to death. And this is the method ſtill, though heightned and improved; and our *Religion* has ſuffer'd infinitely more ſince we us'd it againſt *each other*, than when they manag'd it againſt the *whole community*. But beſides this *defamation* of Perſons, another branch of this black Art is the *depraving* of Writings, both in the ſence and very letter, and direct words; for the former of theſe, whoſoever obſerves the ſtrange perverſions, and affected miſtakes of mens meanings viſible in many of our *Polemick* diſcourſes, will ſure reſolve that a mans *intentions*, as well as his *words* and *actions* may be calumniated: Nor does the *letter* ſcape better, every period which threatens danger to the cauſe muſt be mutilated and diſmembred, and as *Sampſon* was by the *Philiſtines*, loſe its Hair and Eyes, and then be made ſport for the whole party. And I fear there are too few, who do not in this caſe take the *Jewiſh* reparation, an *Eye for an Eye*, &c. retaliate to the adverſary the foul play they receive. But ſome advance yet higher, and think it not enough to make an Argument or Teſtimony uſeleſs to the *Enemy*, unleſs they draw it over to *themſelves*, make it *betray* the ſide it was to *maintain*, and as a Conqueror uſes to reſtore Arms to ſuch of the adverſe party, as will turn to his, ſo after they have by ſatisfactions ſecur'd themſelves of its aid, it ſhall then be made as potent as is poſſible, and with ſuch kind of *Renegado troops* as theſe, ſome *cauſes* have been much ſupported. Yet were this *violation* of-

1. Upon defamation of mens perſons, and perverting their writings:

fer'd

fer'd only to the writings of living men, who might vindicate it, 'twere not ſo tranſcendently *ignoble*, but it moſt frequently falls upon thoſe, who have made their beds in the duſt; who have chang'd their own *Form*, and cannot ſecure their *Writings* from the ſame *fate*: Nay, 'tis yet more frequently *thoſe*, whom we have all reaſon to ſuppoſe, and moſt of us profeſs to believe, *glorified Saints*; and this ſuperadds a daring preſumption to all other circumſtances of the guilt, and heightens an injuſtice into Sacriledge. It has always been held the moſt deteſtable ſort of *forgery* to counterfeit *Teſtaments*, though the *Teſtator* were of never ſo low a quality, or his *bequeſts* of never ſo mean a value: And ſhall it now paſs for a piece of *commendable dexterity*, an art of manage to falſifie thoſe *writings* by which the Fathers of the Church deſign'd to entail *truth* and *piety*, not *ſtrife* and *faction* upon her? We know, *Necromancy* has juſtly been reputed one of the moſt horrid forms of *Sorcery*, becauſe it enforced *dead* men to ſpeak what the living were inquiſitive to hear. I leave it to be conſider'd what this wants of that, beſides the dreadful *ceremonies* of the Incantation; certainly 'tis a guilt which nothing but our too familiar acquaintance with it could make unformidable. And indeed this whole method of ſerving a *cauſe* by ſuch *ſiniſter means* is ſo utterly repugnant to the Principles even of ingenuous nature, that we can ſcarce caſt a greater ſcandal upon an Opinion, than to ſhew it needs ſuch Aids. 'Tis by *Hiſtorians* branded as an execrable fact in him, who to ſecure himſelf from a *neighbour Prince*, call'd the *Turk* into Chriſtendom: But ſure thoſe who to fortifie their ſide have brought in this Artifice of *calumniating* and *falſifying*, have done an Act no leſs *impious*; the conſtitution of Chriſtianity agreeing full as well with the *Alcoran* as with theſe *Piæ fraudes*; as ſome of them who perhaps mean the *fraud* more than the *Piety* are pleas'd to call them. Nay indeed they accord not much better with *Philoſophy* than *Divinity*, every man knows the nature of contraries is to combate and expel, not to cheriſh and ſupport one another. How abſurd is it then for thoſe, who ſay they deſign to advance *truth*, to make *falſhood* their Inſtrument? I wiſh they would experiment to accommodate their ſecular concerns at the ſame rate, let them *cool* them in the Fire, *warm* them in the Froſt, and *feed* themſelves by perpetual Faſting, and when they find cauſe to commend the efficacy of that Method, they may with fairer pretence in this higher inſtance reconcile the feuds of Reaſon and of Nature, and make a *lye* the Evidence of *Truth*. In the interim, it may well paſs for *Sophiſtry* as well as *ſin*; and doubtleſs whatever advantages are hop'd for to private Sects and Parties by this Art, Chriſtian Religion in general is hugely prejudiced by it: For when men ſhall compare the veracity of Heathens with our falſhoods; learn from *Hiſtorians*, that among the *Perſians*; αἴσχιστον τὸ ψεύδεσθαι νενόμισται, *to lye was deem'd a fault of the greateſt turpitude*, and they therefore laid an ill Character upon perſons in debt, ὅτι ἀναίσχυντος ὀφείλοντα καὶ τὸ ψεύδεσθαι λέγειν, *becauſe he that is ſo muſt needs tell lyes:* And when they ſhall ſee in the Laws of *Cingis* a barbarous *Tartar*, Lying made a *capital crime*, and yet among Chriſtian *Caſuiſts* made a *holy artifice*, they will be tempted to think our *end* as fictitious as our *way*; and that our Religion has little countenance from *truth*, which is thus fain to make *lyes* its Refuge. Thus unhappily do theſe Arrows revert, not only on *thoſe* who ſhoot them, but in the face of *Chriſtianity* it ſelf, which is defam'd, and traduced by thoſe *ſlanders*, we aim at our *private adverſaries*.

2. *Upon evacuating the Law, and making void the Precepts of the Goſpel:*

3. But beſides this *direct*, there are other more *oblique* Ways of making *vice* ſubſervient to *Religion*, or to ſpeak more properly, of making *Religion*

ſubſervient

ſubſervient to *vice*; for ſome Zealots of ſeveral parties, who more regard the *numerouſneſs* than *purity* of their Profeſſors, diſcerning how much the ſenſual part of mankind ſtartles at the ſtrictneſs of Goſpel-precepts, are induſtrious to take off that diſcouragement, not by convincing them of the real divine ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs of them, but by debaſing and accommodating them more to the carnal appetite: Yet here men proceed not all alike, ſome uſe Chriſts yoke, as *Hananiah* did that of *Jeremy*, break it quite off; others only eſſay to ſlacken and alleviate it, that it may not pinch the luſts of *libertine Proſelytes:* Of the firſt ſort are ſuch, as having made the *adherence* to their Party the infallible mark of *Sanctification*, and that Sanctification of *Election*, do from thence proclaim to all who are ſo qualified a general Jubilee and manumiſſion from the bond even of *Chriſt*'s as well as *Moſes*'s Law, or if ſome of them allow it to remain an impotent director, yet while they affirm that *God ſees no ſin in his Elect*, or if he do, beholds them as a Father does the harmleſs falls of his Child, rather with *ſmiles* than *anger*, they make the *violations* of it ſo ſafe, that they are too ſure to be many, and between abrogating and thus enervating a law, the *difference* is merely verbal.

4. Of the ſecond ſort are ſome, who by indulgent and partial gloſſes, ſeek to mollifie the ſeverity of Chriſts commands. That contrive for their Clients not the *means* of Obeying, but the *arts* of Eſcaping them. Like the *unjuſt Steward*, teach their Lords Debtors to *write Fifty inſtead of a Hundred*; and decide Caſes of conſcience more according to the *intereſts* and *paſſions* of men, than the *will* of Chriſt. There are a generation of men of whoſe Dexterity in this faculty the world has taken ſo much notice that I need not name them, a ſort of eaſie *Caſuiſts* who ſeem to have erected a *Court of Equity* to relieve men againſt the *rigour* of *divine Law*; and there is little doubt but they ſhall find enough ready to make ſuch *appeals:* Men love to be Chriſtians as cheap as they can, and therefore will cloſe with that party, which offers the eaſieſt terms: And then while theſe ſpiritual *Pioneers* do thus enlarge the narrow way, make it a road as well for the Beaſt as the Man, the *brutiſh ſenſual*, as well as *rational divine* Part of us, no wonder though Sholes of Converts throng in to them. But 'tis to be conſider'd that all this while this is winning Proſelytes to themſelves, not to God; the gaining them to a *Sect*, not a *Religion*; at leaſt not to that pure religion, and undefiled, which the grand Author of our Faith has both exemplified, and propos'd to us; for how much that ſuffers by this way of propugning private opinions, is more than enough apparent. Yet ſo ambitious are our prime leaders of ſuch Trophies, that in order to them ſome are ſaid to aſcend yet a ſtep higher, and beſides this general encouragement they give to mens luſts by *taking off* Reſtraints, do in ſome caſes actually *promote* and *excite* them. For when they ſee a licentious perſon whoſe *acquiſt* they judge beneficial to their *cauſe*, they have artifices of fomenting his riots, do not only take off the *bridle*, but uſe the *ſpur* alſo, hoping that at the rebound it may conduce to their *End*. If any think it impoſſible it ſhould do ſo, let them conſider that among our various Opinions ſome there are which ſell Heaven much cheaper than others dare, that allow ſuch *eaſie atonements* as the moſt *habitual ſinner* need not deſpair of: And then the moſt infallible means to aſcertain ſuch to that ſide, is to make them too bad for any other. For when a man is reſolute to keep his *ſins* while he *lives*, and yet unwilling to relinquiſh all *hopes* when he *dies*, 'tis more than probable he will embrace that profeſſion which bids faireſt to the reconciling thoſe ſo diſtant intereſts; and therefore the *greater*

3. *Upon ſlackening the ſeverity of its commands.*

ter malefactor he is, the more sure he will be *to fly to the horns of this Altar*; the nearer sinking, the apter to catch at these reeds; so that the Project is not *impolitick*, though God knows so *impious*, that 'tis much fitter for the School of *Machiavel* than of *Christ*; and seems to verifie that imputation as to a part of Christians, which *Julian* once as falsly as maliciously affixt upon the whole: That *their Church was an Asylum and sanctuary for the most flagitious offenders, and protected those guilts to which no other religion allowed any Expiation.* 'Tis indeed so horrid that I cannot think there are many *consciences* so cauteriz'd by this fiery *zeal* as to admit it, yet that some have done it, there is too much certainty, and therefore 'tis no improper instance in our present argument; for if mens *eagerness* to support their several sides, can transport them to such *attempts* as these, 'tis abundant Evidence how much Christianity loses by these contests of under-factions, which while they pretend to *guard*, do indeed *invade* her under her own Colours.

Some think that their great zeal will commute and make amends for their greater wickedness.

5. But besides the faults men commit with this immediate *avow'd aspect* upon their religion, there are others which slily shroud themselves under the *skirt* of its *mantle*: I mean those *Sins* of common life, which though they pretend not to advance the cause, yet when acted by a *Zealot* are thought to be overwhelm'd by his heroick *Piety*. Indeed men who make themselves so much work about others *faith*, are seldom at leisure to regulate their own *practice*, and so have no way of stating their accounts with God, but by balancing the *excess* of the one against the *defects* of the other: How such reckonings will pass the grand Audit, 'tis I think not hard to divine; but in the interim, it keeps them very chearful and secure, teaches them a Receipt to retain all their *Sins*, and yet lose none of their *confidence*; so that when they have immerst themselves in all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, they can trust their zeal to refine them from all that Dross. Nor does it only thus reconcile them to their own vices, but to other mens also, whose most brutish sensualities they can look on with perfect patience, nay even *Atheism* it self can have *fair Quarter*: They are not much discomposed to see men have *no Religion*, 'tis only the having *one different* from their own that awakes their indignation; then like *Saul* when seiz'd on by the *evil spirit*, they cast about their Javelins, think no rigor too great on such a provocation; yet even here they have intervals, and the very same persons who are thus at odds upon a *religious*, can unite upon a *vitious* account. Those who mutually denounce *damnation* to each other, can with full accord combine in those *practices* which will ascertain it to them both, as if they so much fear'd to have their *predictions* defeated, that they would be each others *convoy* to the land of darkness. Those that will by no means meet at the *Church*, know not when to part at the *Tavern*, and though they will not joyntly partake of the *Cup of the Lord*, are yet very sociable at the *Cup of Devils*; I mean those excessive debauches, which are a most acceptable drink-offering to those infernal spirits. Have we not seen many whose distant opinions have fastned upon one another the brand of *Antichristianism*, who have yet like *Gog* and *Magog* joyn'd against the holy City? And those who could never agree on the way of setting up *Christs Throne*, have yet been very unanimous in pulling down the *Kings*. Thus alas, do we justle one another out of the *narrow path* that leads to life, but can hand in hand run our Career in the *broad way* of destruction. And doubtless this great unevenness, these spiritual feuds, and carnal endearments between the same persons; this *impetuous zeal*, and as *impetuous lusts* in the same breasts could never be, did not men depend so confidently

confidently on the *one*, as to think it will commute, and ſatisfie for the *other*. But alas, how groundleſs a Preſumption this is, the whole tenour of the Goſpel does abundantly witneſs. In all that grand *Charter* where is there the leaſt clauſe importing ſuch an *immunity*? I am ſure there are multitudes that aſſert the contrary. Indeed the whole frame of the Evangelical covenant is totally againſt it: That requiring an entire uniform Sanctity, and allowing no other *priviledge* to the *ſins* of the moſt knowing Profeſſors, but a *prehominence* in *puniſhment*, the being beaten with many *ſtripes*. And when 'tis conſider'd that the *end* of all religion is but the drawing us to a *conformity* with God, the impreſſing on us ſome Character of his eternal goodneſs and holineſs, 'twill be as abſurd as impious to believe that our *zeal* to any Religion can abſolve us from that *purity* which is the end and deſign of all. And while this is the way men take to approve their piety, 'tis no marvel to find ſo *many* Chriſtians, and ſo *little* Chriſtianity in the world: For that is not to be eſtimated by the *number* of its profeſſors, but by their *obedience* to its Rules, and he that gives up his *name* to it and not his *heart*, will receive as little *advantage* by it, as he brings *honour* to it, and how little that is in reſpect of its internal Efficacy, is I preſume competently evidenced.

Our diviſions are prejudicial to the progreſs of the Goſpel, by hindring the converſion of its enemies.

6. But that we may more throughly diſcern how univerſally deſtructive our *wranglings* are to it, in all its *concerns*, let us a little examine whether they do not endamage it even in reſpect of *outward profeſſion* alſo. This may ſeem a ſtrange Query to thoſe who think their *diſputes* about Religion are to denominate them the great *confeſſors* of the Age: Yet certainly there is but too much ground not only for the *enquiry*, but to reſolve it in the *affirmative*. And if it prove ſo, 'twill infer but ſadly to thoſe who having laid the whole ſtreſs of their Hopes upon their zeal to advance their Faith, will be found to have *pull'd down* more than they have *built up*. Now Chriſtianity may in reſpect of profeſſion decay two ways, either in its *hopes*, or in its *poſſeſſion*, the one in relation to *Aliens*, the other to *Diſciples*. The firſt by hindring the acceſs of *new* Converts, the ſecond by ſtaggering or alienating the *old*, and both theſe ways ſhe viſibly appears to ſuffer by our diviſions. And firſt, if we conſult but our experience, if we truſt but our own obſervations, we cannot but confeſs that the Goſpel has long been at a great ſtand: That that *Sun* which at its firſt ariſing was like *David*'s, *Pſal.* 19. ſurrounded the world in a vigorous efficacious motion, is ſince become like *Joſhua*'s, *Joſh.* 10. 12. arreſted in its courſe: Nay like *Hezekiah*'s, gone backward, *Iſa.* 38. 8. *Mahumetiſm* (if not *Paganiſm*) having long taken up its ſeat in divers of the moſt flouriſhing Apoſtolick plantations. A ſad change, that from the daily and numerous acceſſion of the firſt times, it ſhould now become a kind of *Prodigie*, a piece of *news*, ſcarce heard in an Age, that one ſingle *Proſelyte* is gain'd to the *Church*; yet that thus it is, is too obvious to be denied. And truly it is not much leſs apparent that our diſſentions have in a great degree contributed to it. For firſt, as to the *extirpation* of the Eaſtern Churches, he that ſhall examine the records of thoſe times, will have cauſe to ſay, their Jangling and Diviſions were not only in a *moral* or *divine*, but even in a *proper natural ſence*, the Inſtruments of it. The *Turk* only coming in at thoſe breaches which themſelves had made, nor had their *Candleſtick* probably been removed, had they not firſt abus'd its *light*, to the ſetting themſelves in *Combuſtion*. That the ſame *cauſe* has not yet had the ſame *effect* among us, is owing not to its *unaptneſs* to produce it, but to the admirable *patience* and *mercy* of God, who yet withholds that fatal Judgment, which we do our parts to

pull upon our ſelves; our mutual violences againſt one another herein unhappily combining and making one united force againſt us all. But though the *divine goodneſs* hath hitherto ſo countermined our *treachery* to our ſelves, as not to ſuffer us to enjoy that ſtate of darkneſs we have ſo courted, yet certainly our *contentions* are extremely acceſſary to the continuing it upon others, our many *new* and *wandring lights*, however they fail of having that Property of the *Pillar of fire*, *Exod.* 14. of illuminating and conducting the *Iſraelites*, yet too much anſwer its other, in becoming *cloud* and *darkneſs* to the *Ægyptians*; there being ſcarce any thing more apt to intercept the beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs from the Heathen world, every of thoſe *little encloſures* our Factions have made in the Church, becoming a *great partition-wall* to keep others out of it. This may be made evident in ſeveral reſpects. As firſt, in relation to thoſe many *moral obliquities* in which our eager diſputes do (as hath already been ſhewed) betray us, which cannot but give ſo much *ſcandal* to any conſidering man, that we can ſcarce hope any can turn to us as to a better Religion, but will rather think it the way to relinquiſh all; to obliterate thoſe *native impreſſions* of Piety and Honeſty they brought with them into the world, ſo that if we expect any *Proſelytes*, it muſt be only ſuch as would live *worſe* than mere *nature* allows them.

Our differences at home make us backward in propagating the Goſpel abroad amongſt Infidels;

7. But this though as important a conſideration as can well be, I ſhall not here inſiſt on, having in the ſecond Section given ſome inſtances how apt our *Morality* is to defame our *Divinity*, and confirm men in Oppoſition to it. But though this be a *great*, yet 'tis not the *only* means by which our Diſſentions hinder the progreſs of the Goſpel, for they do not only make *Infidels* leſs inclinable to receive it, but *us* to propagate it. Thoſe do ſo buſie and engroſs us, that there is neither leiſure nor heart left for this. Our *activeſt ſpirits* are ſo engaged at home in aſſerting their *private quarrels*, that all ſuch *foreign deſigns* are forgot. For as in *Civil*, ſo in *Eccleſiaſtical* concerns, every one is more Induſtrious to advance his *peculiar* intereſt than that of the *community*, accordingly we find innumerable promulgers of every new Opinion. No *Sect* wants its *Apoſtles* to propagate and diffuſe it; but where are there any that have the like care for the main *Root* of Chriſtian Religion, which they have for theſe little *Twigs* and *Off-ſets* which they have planted in their own Gardens; how many ages muſt we look back to find a man that has made it his buſineſs to convert *Infidels* to the Faith? 'Tis true indeed there are ſome very magnificent relations of *modern attempts* this way, of great induſtry ſome have us'd to bring the moſt ſavage Nations to the obedience of Chriſt: But if we examine, 'twill be obvious, the main deſign was to ſubject them to themſelves. 'Twas not ſo much their *Heatheniſm* as their *territories* they invaded, and ſuch *Apoſtles* as theſe are ill qualified to make S. *Paul*'s profeſſion, 2 *Cor.* 12. 16. *I ſeek not yours, but you.* And the ſucceſs of ſuch Eſſays hath been anſwerable to the motive; they have won *riches* but not *Souls*. The *Goſpel* in one hand and a *ſword* in the other has made many *ſlaves*, but I fear few *Chriſtians*. Indeed, what encouragement had thoſe poor creatures to receive a Religion from their Oppreſſors? Why ſhould they think that thoſe who tortured and kill'd their *bodies*, were really concern'd to ſave their *Souls*? or that thoſe who would not permit them to enjoy what was their own, meant to help them to any thing better? And while the *felicities* of another world were recommended to them only by *ſuch*, as had deprived them of all in *this*, we cannot wonder at their *little appetite* to embrace them; or to find the oppreſt *Indians* proteſt againſt that heaven where the *Spaniards* are

to

to be their cohabitants. In ſhort, this is ſure ſuch a method of *Evangelizing*, as too widely differs from that which firſt planted the *Church*, to be likely to advance its *growth*: So that notwithſtanding all pretences of this kind, we may reſume our aſſertion, and conclude that our *inteſtine diſcords* (perhaps not thoſe alone) have diverted the *Zeal* of this more Chriſtian undertaking, and left a great part of the world under that invincible Ignorance S. *Paul* mentions, *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they call on him, in whom they have not believed, and how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard; and how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* And God knows whether we have not herein provided better for their Excuſe than our own.

8. There is yet another way by which our *diviſions* impede their *converſion*, and that is by giving them *prejudice* to that Doctrine about which our ſelves cannot agree. 'Tis an univerſal Maxim that *truth is always conſonant to it ſelf*; and therefore where they ſee ſo little *unity* they have too much *temptation* to doubt of Truth. He that wandring ſhould meet a Company that offer to conduct him to his journeys end, might reaſonably incline to deliver himſelf up to their *guidance*; but if he find them unagreed upon the way, one Diſputing for this, and another for that, and every one proteſting againſt all but his own; he would ſure retract his *confidence*, and think they offer'd him only more variety of miſtakes, reſolve it as ſafe to truſt himſelf to his *own* Errors as *other mens*. And this alas, ſeems to be too exact a parallel of the preſent caſe; we Chriſtians do ſo mutually damn one another, that a poor *Turk* or *Heathen* will think, he rather *multiplies* than *ends* his Danger by aſſociating himſelf with us; for there being ſo many parties, which ſoever he joyns himſelf to, there will be abundant odds againſt him; ſo that if he could be ſecur'd the truth were among us, yet the great difficulty of finding it out, would be a very diſheartening conſideration. Beſides, men love in *tranſactions* of great Importance to have as *many* and as *credible Vouchers* as may be; and upon that ſcore 'twill ſure be but a cold inducement to any to turn *Chriſtian*, to foreſee, that when he has done ſo, he ſhall be *diſown'd* by far the greater part of that number, and that at his entrance into the *Church*, he ſhall be met with almoſt as many *Anathema's*, as when he was an *Infidel*. Nay, I ſcarce know whether I may call it an entrance into the *Church*, or rather into a *Conventicle*, or *particular Congregation*, our Schiſms and Separations having hardly left a poſſibility of *external communion* with the *univerſal Church*, ſince the Communicating with one part of it, does infallibly Excommunicate from another. Thus have we placed our *flaming Sword* (though God knows no *Cherubim*) at the gate of our Paradiſe, and when God calls all men to the *waters of life*, our Contentions have made them like *thoſe of Marah*, ſo bitter and unpleaſant, as deters and averts men from them: Which as it is in the higheſt degree injurious to them, ſo is it contumelious to *him*, whoſe invitations are by this means fruſtrated; 'tis in ſome degree the evacuating one of the main *purpoſes* of Chriſts coming into the World, which was to *call men out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*, and as *He* was thus ſent by his Father, ſo alſo were the *Apoſtles* ſolemnly commiſſionated by him to preach to the Gentile world, who with indefatigable induſtry and reſolute ſufferings purſued the *charge*; and ſure this is competent evidence, that the deſign was of the greateſt and moſt weighty importance, and ſuch as can never be out-dated, till there ceaſe to be objects of it, unbelievers to convert: And by that let us meaſure the guilt of obſtructing it, which if we would impartially

and doth prejudice them againſt thoſe doctrines we cannot our ſelves agree upon,

do, I assure my self the most *passionate Bigot* of any Party must confess, that it infinitely out-weighs all the Piety his doctrine can pretend to, that his *peculiar* Church gains not so much as the *Catholick* loses: And that how confidently soever he hath Canoniz'd his quarrels, they are indeed but the worst sort of Heathens, and serve to keep out the better. Yet be-
and stagger the Faith of its old professors,
sides the mischief they do in relation to those that are *without*, they are extremely pernicious to those that are *within*, and that not only to some *one Sect*, but like an *universal poyson*, that is equally deadly to the most contrary complexions, they operate on the most distant ranks of Professors, the *tender* and the *obdurate*, the *scrupulous* and the *profane*. And first for the tender tremulous Christian, 'tis easie to discern how much he must be distracted and amaz'd by them; for while he hears each Sect thunder out *Damnation* against each other, he cannot but be startled at the *danger* of adhering to the *wrong*, and though that may a-while excite his diligence to discover the *right*, yet when he comes to that inquisition, he will meet with so many *Polemick intricacies* to entangle him, that after many turns, first to one side, and then to another, he will be apt to think the only *clue* to extricate him out of this *labyrinth* of many Religions, *is to abandon all.* Nor is this *mere speculation* and *Conjecture*, God knows we have had successively through the whole round of Error too many *practick experiments* of it. Several persons there have been, whose Zeal to find out *truth* by an unhappy rule of *False*, directed them to allow of *every Error*: While like *sick men*, who desire to die good-cheap, they put themselves into the hands of any *Empirick*, follow each bold pretender, that has the impudence to talk of Truth, till Superstition ends in Profanation, *Godliness* proves *Atheism*, and by having been of *many Sects*, at last have *no Religion.* And surely this is a most unhappy effect of our discords, thus to be *stumbling-blocks* in our brothers way, and when we remember the woes pronounc'd against those that shall Scandalize any of the little ones, 'twill be strange how men can think to approve their *Christianity*, by the ruine of their Brothers, or secure themselves of *Heaven* by keeping others thence: For though Christ tells his Disciples there should be some that should think it a *service* to God *to kill their Bodies*, yet to fancy the *destroying of souls* so too, is a Deception of which we have neither *record* nor *prediction* in Holy Writ, and is a superfetation of the spirit of delusion, peculiar to those who have placed their own sanctity in these religious wranglings, which serve
and tempts bad men to doubt of, and bid defiance to all Religion.
to destroy it in other men. And as they thus serve on the one side to shipwrack the *faith* of these weak unstable Souls; so do they on the other advance the *impiety* of the daring sinner; for as they are Temptation to the *one*, so are they Pretence and Excuse to the *other* to bid defiance to all Religion. He whose dissolute *affections* have so long been courting his *understanding* to turn Atheist, will sure not lose the advantage of so plausible an argument as our *divisions* afford him; and since his *lusts* engage him in an irreconcileable War against the *practick part* of Piety, he will most gladly embrace this occasion of quarrel against the *Theory* also: So making himself entire, and extinguishing those uneasie regrets and misgivings arising from the repugnancy of his *life* to his *belief.* It were not hard to give a *compendium* of these mens *Logick*, and draw out those *Schemes* of Discourse, by which from our *differences* in Religion they infer the *discarding* of all. But I fear these are already too well known, and where they are not, I should be loth to be any mans Instructor. This is I am sure too palpable, that how *fallacious* soever these Reasonings are, they have been very *operative*, as appears by the number of those *avowed*

Atheists

Atheiſts among us, who placing themſelves *in the ſeat of the ſcorner*, give themſelves much pleaſing Divertiſement by *deriding* our eager *ſcuffles* about that which they think nothing. If any man thinks that the *Church* is no loſer by the defection of ſuch *Libertines*, I muſt be allowed to diſſent from him: For firſt, there are examples of the moſt vicious Perſons, that have been reduced, and while they retain their Chriſtian *belief*, that lays ſuch undeniable obligations to good *life*, that whenever they reſume their *reaſon*, they muſt take up *vertue* alſo with it; ſo that there is an equal poſſibility of their being *good*, that there is of their being *rational*: But when all hope and fear of a future eſtate is diſclaim'd, when thoſe cords are broken which ſhould pull them up from the Dungeon, then, and not before is their ſtate viſibly deſperate. But beſides this poſſibility of *recovering them*, the danger of *loſing others* is to be conſidered. Bold *Atheiſm* is like a raging *Peſtilence*, which taints the very *Air*, ſo that thoſe impious *diſcourſings* which are the *effects* of ſome mens Vices, may be the *cauſe* of others; and we too often ſee that thoſe who aſcended themſelves *by degrees*, do *in an inſtant* advance their *Proſelytes* to the height of Irreligion, as appears by the ſtrange proficiency of ſome, whoſe Years allow them not to have arrived to it otherwiſe than *per Saltum*. And ſure this ſpreading Contagion has been ſo deſtructive to the Church, that it were to be wiſht, the mere titular Chriſtians had rather remain'd ſuch, than thus to have averted others from being ſo much.

In propagating our particular Sects and Opinions we expoſe Chriſtianity in general.

9. And now if all theſe ſcandals be worth our regret, if the emboldening and exaſperating the *bad*, the corrupting the *innocent*, and the decay of Chriſtian *profeſſion* conſequent to both, be *formidable Evils*, we know where to charge the *guilt*. Our *contentions* muſt be arraign'd as *acceſſaries* if not *principals* in the caſe: And then ſure it will befit our angry Zealots to conſider, whether this be the way of *advancing Gods truth, or what account they will give to the Lord of the Vineyard*, who while they pretend to dreſs and prune the *branches*, do thus debilitate and deſtroy the *roots*. Nay, indeed in this they are treacherous even to their own pretenſions, for all thoſe ſeveral religions which they ſo tenderly cheriſh, have no *proper root* of their own, but like Excreſcencies, ſpring out of the *main ſtock* of Chriſtianity, live by its juice and moiſture, and conſequently, can never hope to ſurvive it. And then certainly there can be nothing more ridiculous, than to expreſs their kindneſs to the *one*, by ways that are ſo ruinous to the *other*. 'Tis as if a *Paſſenger* in a ſhip ſhould, to fortifie his *private Cabin*, tear up the *planks* and expoſe the whole Veſſel to ſinking: Yet thus prepoſterouſly do many of our *chief Pilots* apply their care. In the mean time, it cannot but be a very *delightful proſpect* to the grand Enemy of Souls, to ſee us thus buſily promote his *intereſt*, lay *ſnares* for our ſelves, and by our own *folly* do that which all his *ſubtilties* could never compaſs. Nor can we think but he will be as *officious* to us as is poſſible, while we are thus employed, will help us to contrive our *Turrets*, whilſt he ſees we pluck out *ſtones* from the *foundation* to build them with; nor ſhall we ever want *new models* of Churches, ſo long as they thus help to deſtroy the *old*; and how aptly they are fitted for that Purpoſe, needs (I ſuppoſe) no farther Demonſtration.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A Survey of the Mischiefs arising from Disputes, in reference to Civil Peace.

Our Contentions are very injurious to our civil peace:

1. AND now sure we cannot but conclude our *Contentions* highly injurious to *Christianity*, that thus assault it both in the *Practick* and *Theory*: And indeed how fierce soever our quarrels are with one another, the heaviest blows are sure to fall on that, which as in its constitution is of the most Pacifick temper imaginable, so it has the common fate of reconcilers to suffer from all parties. But *Godliness having the promise as well of this life as of that which is to come*, it often happens that there is such a consent between our *spiritual* and *secular* Concerns, that the Mischiefs that oppress the *one* do reflect on the *other*: And indeed Religion when intire and united, is one of the best bonds of *Civil* as well as *Ecclesiastical* Peace, (as even those attest, who defying all other ends of it, do yet admit it a useful State-engine;) from whence 'tis consequent, that the *distractions* and *divisions* in that must have proportionably a contrary influence, and infect *communities* with Discord, Tumult and Disorders. And this is an *effect* with which I think not unfit to bring up the *rear* of the foregoing Mischiefs, it being not so purely Secular, as not to suit our present subject; for *outward order* and *unity* can never be so innocently disturb'd, but that *Christianity* must be wounded in it also: And besides, it may perhaps obtain more consideration than the former, as being of a nature wherein the generality of men will think themselves the most concern'd; for though there be many that can look on the ruine both of Christian practice and profession, with *Gallio*'s indifference, *Acts* 18. 17. and care for none of those things, yet when the siege draws closer, when they find themselves begirt in their worldly interests, and that the same Deluge that overwhelms *Churches*, may bear down *Palaces* also, perhaps they may think the matter not so contemptible. And first, as to the truth of the observation, the *World* has too long groaned under the *Experiment* to need farther proof. That *bitterness* which first tainted the *waters of the Sanctuary*, hath from thence diffus'd it self into our *common streams*, and like the *Ægyptian Plague*, left none uncorrupted: For whether we look upon Families, Neighbourhoods, Kingdoms, any the *least*, or any the *greatest* Societies, we find the miserable *Trophees* of our *holy Wars*, in Factions and Confusions; I would

1. They disturb the peace of Families:

I could not say Rapine and Bloud also. For the *first* of these, the domestick Jars caus'd by different Opinions, the *Instances* are numerous, or rather innumerable, which our *own age* and *nation* afford us. How many Servants have on this score been at defiance with their Masters? Children with their Parents? Nay, Wives with their Husbands? Such an unhappy force is there in *mistaken Zeal*, that it dissolves the *closest bonds*, violates all *obligations* natural or civil, while under pretence of service to God, like the *Pharisee*'s Corban, it evacuates all duty to man; and this has made such ruptures and divisions in Families, that that delightful prospect the *Psalmist* so much commends, that of *Brethrens dwelling together in unity*, *Psalm* 133. is scarce any where to be met with; but instead of that, such rancour and bitterness, treachery and malice, as if men either mistook Christs *prediction*, *Luke* 12. 52. for a *precept*, or at least were willing to advance his *Prophetick* Office upon the ruine of his *Kingly*, and to verifie his *presage* by breaking his *command*. And as the Oeconomical order and peace is thus disturb'd, so if he that misses quiet *at home* should seek for it *abroad*, he will

will ſoon find himſelf diſappointed, and diſcern that as the *ſocieties* grow greater, ſo do the *diſorders* alſo, and that private ſtrifes do as much combine to make *parties* and *factions*, as families do to make *Cities* and *Corporations*. By this means that mutual communication, by which the Members of civil bodies ſhould not only benefit one another, but ſecure the whole, is interrupted, and men live not as *neighbours*, but *ſpies*, always upon deſigns of Entrapping and Enſnaring; for while they look on one another as *enemies to God*, they think that reſcinds all obligations of *friendſhip among themſelves*, and when Religion bears the *Standard*, the *War* will be concluded neceſſary and honourable. But though it be ſo in *imagination only*, 'tis ſure there are ſome, who make it *really profitable*; for as in moſt *Camps*, the greater Number are attracted rather by hope of *booty* than concern for the *cauſe*; ſo here, many men *liſt* themſelves under one Party, that they may have pretence to *prey* upon the reſt. And to that End ſeveral very commodious *Axioms* have been taken up. As that *No faith is to be kept with Hereticks*; that *Dominion is founded in Grace*, &c. by ſuch meaſures as theſe the goods of the *Ægyptians* become lawful prizes to any, that pleaſe to call themſelves *Iſraelites*; and indeed *Jews* they may be call'd in that notion we vulgarly uſe it of *unjuſt* and *cruel extortioner*: But ſure not ſuch *Iſraelites* as Chriſt defines *Nathanael*, *Joh.* 1. 47. *without guile*: For having thus conſecrated their frauds, and found an expedient of ſerving *God* and *Mammon* together, there is no piece of *deceit* either too big, or too little for them; no tranſaction is ſo important, which can oblige their *fidelity*; none ſo trivial as to diſcourage their *rapine*: Opportunity is the only meaſure and rule of their attempts, by this means no *Obligation* of Contract, no *Laws* of Commerce can eſcape unviolated; every thing is lawful that may weaken the wicked, and that *zeal* which makes men *Saints* in the Church or Conventicle, can make them *Thieves* in the Shop or Market. Thus is Piety made an Engine of rapine, and by theſe *religious riots*, all *boundaries* wherewith Laws or Equity have fenc'd mens diſtinct *properties*, are thrown down: And ſure this is a moſt carnal conſequent of our ſpiritual debates, and bids fair towards the reducing us to that ſtate of common Hoſtility, which ſome have fanſied to be the *Original condition* of mankind: For it renders commerce ſo dangerous, that men may within a while think it ſafer to truſt their own *ſtrengths*, than to the ſhelter of thoſe *Laws* and *Civil compacts*, which they ſee ſo avowedly evacuated. And upon this account, though the Injury be immediately done to *private* perſons, it becomes a *publick* miſchief: yet alas, theſe are but the more moderate *effects* of our Diſſentions; they afford more expedite and compendious ways of publick ruine; the *defrauding* or *undermining* of a few Neighbours, are *petty prizes* for thoſe that think they have the ſole right to the Creature, and are thoſe *Meek* who are to *inherit the Earth*, and every ſuch acquiſt only ſerves to fleſh them for a farther chaſe. The *ſpoils* of a broken Kingdom will afford ſomething worth the *ſcrambling* for: And nothing more fit to *break it* than a pretence of Religion, which like the *ſtone* that ſmote *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Image, has ſhivered the moſt goodly Monarchies. And accordingly, we ſee no *Engine* is more conſtantly us'd by men of Seditious ſpirits, to diſturb and ſubvert Governments: Indeed there can be nothing ſo advantageouſly fitted for the purpoſe. For ſhould ſuch perſons unmask their *deſign*, and ſhew it in its *native uglineſs*, ſhould they avow the ſhaking of a *Kingdom* merely to eſtabliſh themſelves in a condition of *wealth* and *grandeur*, the new moulding of a Government only that they might ſhape their own ſhares in it, 'twere impoſſible they

2. They diſturb the peace of Cities and Corporations:

3. They diſturb the peace of whole Kingdoms and Provinces.

ſhould

should find any abettors; for though the *multitude* are always in preparation for *change*, yet 'tis not on Intuition of benefit to some *private persons*, but of somewhat wherein *themselves* may partake: Nor is even the madness of the people mad enough, to expose all their *own interest*, and most important concerns only to promote *those of others*. It has therefore always been both the rule and practice for such designers to suborn the *publick interest* to countenance and cover their *private*; to cry up *Diana* to secure their own *gain*, and to make the seduced *Populacy* like the *Jackal* to the *Lion*, hunt that prey which themselves mean to devour. And of all those artifices by which such *Incendiaries* have set Kingdoms in a *flame*, none has been more universally successful than the *pretext* of Religion, which is thought so *creditable a cause* to engage in, as can convert the *infamous titles* of Rebel and Traitor into those of Patriot and Saint, and consequently, take off all discouragement arising from the disreputation of such an enterprize: And no less potent is it in solving the scruples of its unlawfulness; for by a dexterous anticipation, it makes Conscience a *party*, that it may exclude it from being *judge*, and by that only fallacy of supposing *Religion* to be *a just ground of quarrel*, makes way for all the wild consequences deducible from that *false principle*: And indeed where that is throughly fastned, the *mischiefs* are not only *great* but *incurable*, and yet the more so by how much the person is more zealous. For alas, what will it avail to tell such a man, 'tis a sin to *fight against his King*: when he will tell you 'tis a greater not to *fight for his God*: That he contracts a *heinous guilt* in violating the *peace* of the Church, when he with as great confidence believes, he *merits* in propagating its *truth*. That he is accountable for the *bloud* of his Brethren; when he thinks he has like the *Levites*, *Exod.* 32. consecrated himself in it, and offer'd it an acceptable *sacrifice* to God. Thus unhappily are these men fortified in their *sin*, by presuming it their *Vertue*, and while the *furious zeal* of such is made subservient to the *wicked craft* of others, 'tis a most *apt instrument* of publick Mischief, there being no attempt so desperate, which such may not be put upon, who are methinks us'd, as *Hannibal* is said to have done those Oxen, whose *horns* he first fired, and then sent them to disturb the *Roman* camp: These *men* as those *beasts* are found very useful for the molesting of others; but commonly all they acquire to themselves, is the *smart* of their own *flames*. Few of those who thus in the simplicity of their heart follow an *Absalom* or a *Sheba*, that do not either miscarry together with the *design*, or else live to discern how much their *credulity* was abused; and that both *religion* (however pretended) and *those* that fought for it, were only made *properties* to promote the *lusts of those* who despised both. But 'tis unnecessary to insist farther on the *effects* of such religious Fury, of which *we of this Nation* have had so many and so *costly evidences*, as far transcend the most *tragical descriptions*. God grant we may never have other than our *past experiences* to measure them by: But certainly there is little reason to be secure, so long as the *root* of them, our *speculative differences* daily encrease; for unless we could suppose an Age of such innocence, that there should be none who would *take* any undue Advantages, 'tis sure there will be enough *given*: And indeed when we reflect upon our past Distractions, and consider how trivial the *matter* of most of those debates was, whose *manner* has been so cruelly solemn; how our sleightest *problems* have been writ in *bloud*, that many Thousands have been made *naked* to keep the *Surplice off* a few mens backs, and we have pulled down our *Churches* in displeasure at the *windows*; when I say these and a Thousand the like are considered, we must conclude

that

that there can never *want* Occaſion to them that (in the *Apoſtles* Phraſe) *deſire* Occaſion: The *lighteſt diſtempers* in the Church being *contagious*, and moſt apt (when fomented by ambitious deſigners) to beget an *univerſal Plague* in the Common-wealth. And now who can without horror conſider theſe miſerably perverted *effects* of Chriſtian Religion, that *that* which was deſign'd the moſt *inviolable bond of unity*, ſhould like thoſe curles of entangled Snakes with which *Erinnys* is ſaid to have infuriated *Athemas* and *Ino*, become the *fatal incendiary of the mortalleſt hatred*. That *that Oeconomy* which was meant to *regulate*, ſhould be the Inſtrument of *confounding* and *embroiling* the World; and a *Goſpel of Peace* ſhould thus be made the *Incentive to war*, and create fiercer quarrels than thoſe it was to have compos'd. To *turn the Grace of God into wantonneſs*, is juſtly branded as a *great* Crime, but ſure to turn it *into malice* is yet a *greater*. And though every ſin offers violence to our religion, yet *this* is of all others the moſt *barbarous*, thus to make it Aſſaſſinate it ſelf, become a kind of *Felo de ſe*, and contribute to its own ruine. And that this is the caſe, is I preſume ſufficiently evident in all the *foregoing inſtances*, which as they are moſt obviouſly the *effect* of our eager Diſputes, ſo are they no leſs viſibly *deſtructive* to Chriſtianity in all its intereſts, leave it neither *root* nor *branch*, neither *inward* Vigor, nor *outward* Luſtre; ſo at once rendring it both infertile and unamiable. 'Twas a piece of hoſtile Severity againſt *Moab*, to *fill the land with ſtones, thereby to render it barren*, 2 *King*. 3. 25. The ſlingers went about, and ſmote it: But what *that* ſuffered from *profeſt Enemies*, the *Church* daily ſuſtains from thoſe that call themſelves her beſt *friends*. Our *Benjamites* are ſo in love with their skill of ſlinging to a hairs breadth, their nice Criticiſms, Diſtinctions, and Subtilties, have caſt abroad ſo many *ſtones of contention*, that the Church is become perfect *quarry*, utterly *ſteril* and *unfruitful*, as to all thoſe good works for the production whereof ſhe was ſo peculiarly fenced and cultivated by God; nay, 'twere well if *barrenneſs* were the worſt, and that ſhe had not on the other ſide acquir'd an unhappy *degenerous fertility*: But what a numerous and accurſed Iſſue ſpring from this unpeaceable temper, the foregoing conſiderations do too ſadly demonſtrate; and I doubt not every attentive Obſerver will be able to add *more* (though not *truer*) Inſtances; and beſides to diſcern that this *ſpurious brood* like that of *Hagar*, is grown ſo wantonly inſolent, as to deſpiſe the *right heir* of the Promiſe. The true *Goſpel-Graces* of Meekneſs, Peaceableneſs and univerſal Charity are accounted *Earthly Phlegmatick qualities*, we diſclaim that *Holy Ghoſt* which deſcends in the appearance of the *Dove*, nay, or in *fire* either, unleſs it be like that of *Elijah*, to conſume all that diſguſt us; nor do we meaſure our *Religion* ſo much, by the oppoſition it makes to our *luſts*, as to thoſe whom we firſt make, and then call our *Enemies*. Thus miſerably have we chang'd the Scene, and by *calling evil good, and good evil*, have accumulated injuries upon our oppreſſed Chriſtianity, not only robb'd it of its *rule*, but of its *reputation* alſo. And do we daily thus ſee *Iſhmael* mocking *Iſaac*, and ſhall we not think it time to caſt out the Bond-woman and her Son? Shall we for ever cheriſh this generation of *Vipers* to tear out the *bowels* of our common Mother? I pray God the Queſtion have not as much of *preſage* as *expoſtulation*. For if we conſider the preſent ſtate of things, how our *contentions* plead not only *right* but *preſcription*, there ſeems not much hope of diſpoſſeſſing them, and yet leſs, when 'tis remembred, how they have entwiſted themſelves, not only with the *paſſions*, but *intereſts* of men; two ſuch *potent Abettors* as will buoy up the moſt *forlorn cauſe*. The truth is,

there are many *subterraneous springs* which feed *this Ocean*, and though religion and piety be on all hands demurely pretended, yet as we have seen the *effects* of our debates very *disconsonant* to such a Profession; so if we examine the *originals* and *causes*, we shall find them for the most part as *widely distant*. It may not be amiss to take a short view of some of them; for though I cannot hope the *discovery* of the Causes will contribute to the *general cure*, yet perhaps it may prove *Antidote* to some particular persons, who will be the less apt to admire the verdure of the *leaves* (the flourishing appearances of *zeal* and *piety*) when they find both *fruit* and *root* of so poisonous a quality.

CHAP. XIII.

A Survey of the Causes of Disputes; and first, Pride.

One great Cause of our Contentions and Disputes is Pride.

1. AND in this inquest we find Pride already arraigned to our hands, by the wisest of Men, *Prov.* 13. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention.* It is indeed a most prolifick vice, and there are few *sins* to which it is not either a *parent* or *nurse*: But there is scarce any which does more betray its immediate descent from it than this of *strife* and *debate*, which has so many of the *lineaments* and *features* of the deform'd Mother, as sufficiently attest its *extraction.* And as this is true of *all* strifes in general, so particularly of *those* whereof we now treat: For Pride being it self an internal sin, it has such a neighbourhood with all the notions and speculations of the mind, that it easily makes impressions on them: Nor are we to wonder that the Sacredness of divine things is not *Amulet* enough against its *Charms*, when we remember that the *first act* of Pride that ever was committed, was levelled even *at God* himself; and as it took up its first seat in a spiritual substance, so has it ever since, never acted more *naturally*, and therefore more *vigorously*, than about spiritual matters. Of this the Church in all ages has had many costly Experiments; for if we trace the Catalogues of Heresies from *Simon Magus* his days down to our own, we shall find Pride a *principal Actor* in every *Scene*, though perhaps in *various dresses.* For though Pride be always in the general an affectation of some transcendency, yet it differs as to the particular object, according to the several estimates men make of excellencies. So that the *propugners* of new Opinions, though they have this *common aim*, that they seek their *own exaltation*, yet do not always do it in the *same instances.* For example, *some* have coveted the repute of *profound Inquisitors*, and this Vanity has prompted them to dive so deep into the *bowels* of every the *plainest doctrine*, till at last they have twisted and entangled them into the most *perplexing difficulties.* These *Navigators* think they have never sail'd successfully, till they have found out a *Terra Incognita*, though God knows they bring nothing from thence for the benefit of the habitable world; nor make it their business to *resolve* Doubts, but *start* them. *Another sort* of men there are of so fastidious and petulant wits, that they disdain an *opinion* of which themselves are not the *Authors*; they love not to have their understandings prescrib'd to, by the preconceptions of others, how divinely soever inspir'd, and will rather have a Religion of their *own making* than of *his* whom they pretend to worship. And this, 'tis to be doubted, is the bottom of the great *veneration* some have paid to *Reason*, which they have set up in the *Throne*, not only in defiance of *blind implicit assent*, but

but even of *divine revelation.* But in the mean time 'tis to be obſerv'd that 'tis not reaſon *in general*, the common excellency of our nature that is thus advanc'd, but every mans own *private* and *individual*; which upon a juſt ſcanning will often be found the moſt diſtant thing from what it is call'd: *Paſſion* and *Fancy*, by that omnipotent advantage of being a mans own, often paſſing for *deep diſcourſe* and *ratiocination:* and what a fruitful harveſt of Tares ſuch ſeed is apt to produce, our *reaſon* would inform us if our *experience* did not. To theſe we may add *another rank* of men, who vehemently thirſting after a *name* in the world, hope to acquire that by being the *diſſeminators* of *novel doctrines*; they think while they go on in the *beaten track*, they ſhall be obſcur'd in the *Throng*; the only way to make themſelves conſpicuous is to be ſingular: Thus fondly chuſing to be eminent, though by the infamous Characters of *Heretick* or *Schiſmatick*, and (like him that fired *Diana's* Temple to ſecure himſelf from oblivion) build themſelves *Monuments* of the *Churches ruine:* And ſure this *Theudas* his ambition of being ſome body, has helpt to raiſe more *opinions* than he did *men.* Yet commonly it anſwers it even in that circumſtance alſo; for when by *ſeparating themſelves* from the *unity of the faith*, they have rendred themſelves remarkable, their next aim is to have *others joyn* to them; and ſo they may have the honour of being *leaders*, care not though it be into the ditch. To be call'd of men *Rabbi, Rabbi*, is enchanting Muſick to any *Phariſee*, and ſerves like the Timbrels in *Tophet*, to drown the cries not of their *Children*, but *Mothers* ſcorching in the flames of their contention. Indeed ſo impetuous and uncontroulable is this kind of *vanity*, that like a mighty torrent, it bears down all before it, overwhelms not only the oppoſite *virtues*, but even all *vices* that are not of its own confederacy. Men can in this caſe lay ſevere reſtraints upon their moſt *intimate ſenſualities*, when they ſuſpect them *treacherous* to this grand Deſign. The *Wolf* ſhall be muzled and made to behave himſelf with the meekneſs beſeeming the *Sheeps* cloathing. The *Swine* ſhall be waſht, and by an unnatural violence withheld from the *mire:* All their rapacious and beſtial *appetites* controul'd and made tame, that they worry not their *reputation.* And all this for a little naked *popularity*, for whoſe dear purchace, very many have thought fit to diveſt themſelves, both of lawful and unlawful *enjoyments*; and have thought the tumultuous *applauſe* of a few factious ſpirits worth all that *ſelf-denial.* But all Pride is not ſo perfectly *Chamelion* as to ſubſiſt upon this *mere air*, there is another kind of it that propoſes to it ſelf ſomething beyond this: Such is the affectation of rule and dominion, which though in reſpect of any real good to the ruler, is as very a *Chimæra* as the former; yet commonly they that are under ſuch a *Juriſdiction*, find to their coſt 'tis more than *Imaginative.* And God knows this *aſpiring humour* has been no leſs fatally active in *Eccleſiaſtick* than in *Civil* affairs; nor has the Church ever been in more danger of *Anarchy* than by *thoſe* who moſt impatiently coveted a ſhare in its Government; for where this ſpirit of Ambition is the Impellent, it does like the *Demoniack* in the Goſpel, burſt aſunder all *fetters* and *chains*, violates the unity both of doctrine and diſcipline, nor is any attempt too bold for men thus animated: They who long to be in authority think the *door* opens not quick enough for their entry, and impatient of ſo tedious an expectation, chuſe rather to make breaches in the *walls* (nay ſometimes to undermine the *foundation*) than to want an *acceſs* to their Deſires. Neither is there any thing ſo ſacred, which upon this occaſion they cannot proſtitute; when *Diotrephes*, 3 *Joh.* 9. ſeeks preheminence, the Dictates

even of an *Apostle* shall be rejected; and even the Divinity of *Christ, God blessed for ever*, be trampled on, when *Arius* wants a footstool to climb up to his affected greatness. In a word, if we Examine the occurrences of all ages, we shall find that either the Eagerness of *acquiring*, or the Revenge of *missing dignities*, have been the great *instigators* of Ecclesiastick Feuds; and sure our *Modern* stories, are not likely to fall short of the *Ancient*, in examples of this kind. And as Pride makes *some* thus passionately desirous of rule, so it makes *others* as impatient of being ruled, and even those who cannot hope to arrive to *give* Laws, will not endure to be *under* those already established. That *this* is indeed the Christian *liberty* for which many in our days have so unchristianly contended, is too apparent, the *fundamental quarrel* has been against *subjection:* Yet to countenance and abet that, whole armies of frivolous cavils have been rais'd, and the *Church* attacqued in every its remotest concern; and though there be nothing farther from that unity of mind, to which the simile was first affixt, yet in a perverse sence it imitates the *Ointment* of *Aaron* in *descending from the head to the skirts of the cloathing:* Not only the *supreme* and *more eminent parts*, but the most *slight extrinsick* and *inferior relatives* to Religion being aspersi and depraved; and the most *innocent* Circumstances of Civil or Natural actions made *criminal*, when applied to Divine things. A strange *ineffective power*, which these men have conveyed into Gods service, that it must thus pollute every thing that approaches it. That the *place* where his Honour dwells, must become a *Pesthouse*, and diffuse *contagion* to all in it: (I wish by the way their *Sacriledge* had not been too valiant in despising the Danger of those *infected utensils*, which may perhaps sadly verifie the reproach, and prove *treacherous prizes.*) And when mens *zeal* operates thus unkindly, when the pretence of *internal sanctity* devours all *outward decency*, and *God* is to be honoured and exalted by those ways, whereby *men* would think themselves affronted, and vilified; we have too great reason to think such a zeal as little according to *godliness* as *knowledge*, and that it is not so much the *tenderness* of their Consciences, no nor generally the *weakness* of their Brains, but the *Iron sinew* in their Necks, which makes them at *once* so scrupulous, and so clamorous; for though the *former* might be suppos'd owing to Error, the *latter* can surely proceed from nothing but Pride. Several other instances might be given to shew how that pernicious temper has contributed to the rise and first being of our divisions; and having thus given them birth, it does not like the *Ostrich* abandon its brood, but has as great an influence in the *cherishing* and *maintaining*, as it had in *creating* them. Of this there need no other proof than the mere *nature* of Pride, which as it averts nothing more than *self-condemnation*; so upon pain of that appearance, 'tis irreversibly engag'd in the pursuit of its first undertakings, any *desisting* being interpretatively a *confession* either of an Error or a Defeat, both which are insupportable to an assuming temper: So that besides the *original incentives* forementioned, it has this of *disdain* superadded to actuate its motions. And accordingly we find they are at this rebound the more violent, not only the *success*, but the *credit* of the first enterprize depending upon a vigorous prosecution: So that *Catilines* Maxim of *Villany* seems to have been adopted into some mens *divinity*, and they think past Crimes are only to be secur'd by more and greater. Nor is it only *hope* to atchieve their *design*, or hide their *shame* which thus animates them, *despair* will do it to a yet higher degree. Our concupiscible and Irascible appetites dwell not so remote, but they are ready reserves to one another, and what was *desire* in the pursuit, becomes *anger* and

revenge

revenge in the disappointment; and sure we need not be told the wild effects of those passions. How many men have in a *furious despair* over-acted even their own *projects*, and have made it a malicious consolation in their ruine, to get it attended with that of the publick? As *Herod*, who to secure a *lamentation* at his death, commanded a *Massacre* should accompany it, or (to give a more Ecclesiastical instance) like *Aerius*, who sought the abolishing of that order in the Church, whereof himself could not partake. I wish no mans *Conscience* in our days were qualified to suggest a fresher example. But whilst 'tis so many ways the *interest* of Pride to abet our *contentions*, we cannot think it so sluggish or uninduſtrious an *agent*, as not to find out *expedients* for its purpose. I shall not attempt to give a particular of its *instruments*, when I have said that *Schism* is one of them, I need not add more, since that alone serves both to *complete* and *perpetuate* the Mischief of all our speculative dissentions. How close a Band of concord the *communicating in holy duties* is, we may learn by *Jeroboam*, who seems so well to have understood its unitive efficacy, that he durst not trust the newly divided *Tribes* in a joynt resort to the Temple; and therefore lest the *rupture* he had made in the State should close again, he thinks it necessary to make *another* in the Church, and secure his defection from his *Prince*, by that from his *God*. But we need not borrow a *testimony* from that his impious *Policy*, we have a more *Authentick attestation* from the holy *Psalmist*, who when he would describe the *greatest entireness*, Exemplifies it by the *walking to the house of God as friends*, *Psal.* 55. 14. And the *Apostle* goes yet higher, and from our common *participation* of the Eucharist, infers not only our *union*, but our *incorporation*. *We being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. And then sure we may on the contrary conclude, that our *separation* must have the quite distant effects; alienate our *affections*, and by that means *still* more estrange our *Judgments*. For besides that 'tis natural to men to think they can never run far enough from that they begin to loath, they are in their own defence to amplifie the *differences*, that they may acquit themselves from the *scandal* of a causeless separation; and this God knows is the usual Method among us, when we have broken *communion*, our only study is not how to *repair*, but *justifie it*. The Adversaries *Tenets* are rigorously scanned, new *Charges* exhibited, and the *Schism* defended upon those later discoveries, which were no motives to the making it. And then sure no man can doubt but this is a *proper way*, both to *multiply and Eternize disputes*; and 'tis abundantly manifest, that vanity and elation of mind is the cause that Men thus prefer a *mistaken reputation*, before their own *innocence*, or the Churches *peace*. Indeed if we throughly consider it, we shall find *Pride* is one of the fatallest instruments of Excision, the *two-edg'd sword* by which adverse parties do mutually cut themselves from one another. The very *elements* and *constitutive parts* of a Schismatick, being the *Esteem of himself*, and the *Contempt of others*. *I am not as this Publican*, was, we know, the voice of the proud *Pharisee*, whose very name signifies *separation*, and our modern *Separatists* do but Echo the same note, when they pronounce all those *Heretical* or *Carnal* from whom they have withdrawn. Or perhaps they derive from a yet more ancient president, those of whom the Prophet *Esay* speaks, *Esay* 65. 5. which say, *Stand by thy self, come not near me, for I am holier than thou*; an Insolent kind of language, which the *Cathari* in the *primitive times* did not more exactly transcribe, than many *Sects* of differing denominations have done in *ours*. But 'tis to be remembred, that while the *Pharisee* lookt so fastidiously on the poor

Publican,

Publican, he renounc'd communion in prayers much more acceptable than his own; and those *refined Zealots*, who fear'd *contagion* from the approach of their more innocent Brethren, could boldly venture on the *pollutions* of the most detestable Idolatries: And God knows the note has too ready an application in both instances. In the mean time 'tis a sad contemplation that so much of that *zeal* which makes such a glistering in the world, shall, when brought to the Touch, be found *adulterate*; that the transcendent *purity* men boast of, should prove but a more sublimated *wickedness*, and their *pretence* to spirituality be verified only in *spiritual pride*. Alas, is not the whole *circuit* of Secular things wide enough to contain this *swelling humour?* Are there not *Pomps* and *Vanities* of the world enough to entertain this one *Lust*, but must this *Moabite* be brought into the *Sanctuary?* Can we not be *elevated* enough unless we *trample upon* all that is holy, and make *Religion* Factor for our *Ambition?* We find some very confidently point out *Antichrist* upon the strength of this one predicted circumstance, that he was to *sit in the Temple of God*. But what need we travel beyond the *Alps* to find out that, which *every where* presents it self? Our Pride does too unhappily answer the description; and though there is no instance wherein it can cease to be *Antichristian*, yet surely it is more eminently so, when it thus usurps *Gods seat*, and rules in sacred things. Would God the *pains* and *animosity* which has been spent in discovering and reviling *other* Antichrists, had been diverted to the pulling down of *this*, the labour would have been more effectual even to the immediate end of the Designers; for were this Pride *eradicated*, the Foundation of all Spiritual usurpations were *undermin'd*. But alas, those who exclaim the most loudly against all *foreign Tyranny* on their Consciences, do obsequiously bow to this *intestine Usurper*, make an entire dedition of themselves, and submit to the severest and ignoblest *vassalage*. They have invested it with so absolute and soveraign a Power, that (as *Samuel* warns the *Israelites* of their King, 1 *Sam.* 8.) they are not to call any thing their own, when it is useful to its service: All their powers, all their interests are devoted to it, and that not only to adorn its *pomp*, but to fight its *battels*. Men quarrel and contend till not only *themselves*, but even *Christianity* it self expire in the contest. But if it be indeed certain that every *War* is so far unjustifiable, as are the *causes* of it, 'twill surely be a competent prejudice against our contentions, that our Pride is so much concern'd in them, which is so unchristian a *motive*, as all the *holy water* wherewith men have sprinkled it, can never baptize into a *cleanness*; all the *borrowed dresses* of Zeal and Sanctity, however they may *disguise*, can never *legitimate* it. Those arts of concealment may indeed add a *new guilt*, that of *Hypocrisie*, but can never expiate, no nor extenuate the *old*: And how *Saint-like a form* soever our *Vain glory* puts on, it does but the more own its derivation from *him*, who can *transform himself into an Angel of light*, whose aspirings have first subverted *himself*, and now go on to propagate both his Crime and Ruine to *us*; nor has he ever manag'd that *design* with more Art or Success, than by thus making our Pride a *partition-wall* to divide us from *one another*, and consequently from *God* too; who being, as our Church stiles him, the *author of Peace* and *lover of Concord*, can never joyn himself with the *disturbers of both*, but must necessarily be disobliged by our Dissentions and Schisms.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

A Survey of the Causes of Disputes; Secondly, Curiosity.

1. IF now we proceed farther in our enquiry we shall find, that another grand *incendiary* of our Disputes is *Curiosity*: A vice which though in some respects it may be reckoned a *species* of the *former*, that of Pride, yet in others it admits a *distinct consideration*. This is that baneful *weed* which the Devil made a shift to steal even into *Paradise*, and which has ever since affected the *richest soils*, the most pregnant and polite Wits; nor did it only eject *man* from thence, but it has improved the *original curse*, and multiplied those *briars* and *thorns* among which he was cast, yea, transplanted them from the *Earth*, where they could only raze the skin, into the *Brain*, where they pierce and torture the intellectual and immortal Part of Man. Nay, farther, even that *sweat of his brows*, which was to extirpate them from the *ground*, serves but to water and cherish them in his mind; his very *industry* being in this case the extremest *ill husbandry*, and the more *pains* he takes, the farther he removes himself from all *real advantages* of his toil. *Another cause of our Dissentions is unwarrantable Curiosity.*

2. There are some parts of *Knowledge* which God has thought fit to seclude from us, to fence them not only as he did the interdicted *Tree*, by Precept and Commination, but with Difficulties and Impossibilities; made it not only our *sin* and danger, but our *Folly* and madness to attempt them. Of this kind are the Mysterious parts of our *Religion*, which he shews us as it were a-far off to exercise our *faith* and *reverence*, but stoops them not to our *sense* and *disquisition*. These he has placed like the *Sun*, where they may influence, not annoy; warm, not scorch us. And would we still permit them to remain at that safe and wholsome *distance*, we should find none but *benigne effects*; but so importunate are the instigations of Curiosity, that no *bounds* will keep us from the *Mount*: We will needs break through into the *thick darkness*, how dreadful soever the *thunders* and *lightnings* are in the way. Like bold *Phaetons* we despise all *benefits* wherewith the Father of light and us can court us, unless we may guide his *Chariot*; and we moralize the *Fable* as well in the tragicalness of the *event*, as the insolence of the *undertaking*; this unhappy Curiosity having not only ruin'd many of the *inquisitors*, but set the whole *world* also in a *conflagration*. Nor is this temerity more *fatal* in its Success, than *impious* in its Foundation: For besides that it is a direct *invasion* of Gods peculiar, and *violation* of his Command, it does evidently imply a *distrust*, either of his Wisdom or his Goodness; supposes him either so *ignorant* of the strength of those faculties himself has made, that he has assigned them unproportionable objects, and so they must have new work cut out for them by our selves; or else presumes his *Eye evil* towards his own Creatures; that as the *Devil* once suggested to our *first Parents*, he fears the rivalry of poor mortals, and by an envious detention of some parts of felicity, like one that had been Bountiful only upon *surprize* and *incogitancy*, illiberally retracts and contradicts his *original design* of making Man completely happy. Nay, indeed this represents him unkind, not only to *us his created Images*, but even to that Eternal and express image of his Person, *the Son of his bosom*, who may well be thought to have been, as despised in *his Eyes*, as he was once in *ours*, *Esay* 53. 3. if he have so cheaply expos'd him for their sakes, to whom he denies any of those *intellectual advantages*, which difference *them* from *Beasts*. Thus wickedly curious are we, that rather *Curiosity about some things is both sinful and dangerous*;

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than converse with *vulgar ordinary things*, we create *prodigies*, put *new forms* upon him that is *unchangeable*, rob *divinity* of its most inseparable *attribute*, and not only *disobey* God, but *reproach* him. And then 'tis no wonder, if that which affords so little *glory* to God, hath no more *good will* for Men, and that which thus wars with *Heaven*, leave little peace on *Earth*. Indeed if we will be building our *Babels*, and thus assault *Omnipotence*, 'tis but just we should have our *language confounded*, and that that *knowledge* for which we boldly attempt to rifle Gods cabinet, should like the *Coal* from the Altar, serve only to embroil and consume the *sacrilegious invaders*. Yet besides what is owing to divine vengeance in the case, the thing has in it self a proper, natural efficiency toward it; for when so many men are engag'd in a *blind search*, 'tis not imaginable they should all *stumble* upon the same Notions, and supposing them to fall upon *variety*, 'tis impossible but mens fond overweening of their own conceits and petulant disdains of others, will improve that *variety* into Opposition, and that *opposition* into set and Solemn Feuds. And God knows the Church is too effectively acquainted with this *fatal gradation*, and can experimentally attest the *unhappy propriety* of this sort of Curiosity towards the engendring of *discord* and *confusion*.

in other things 'tis vain, useless and unprofitable.

3. But besides this *higher* rank of things which God hath set so much *above* us, there are others of an *inferior* sort, as much *below* us, which are concealed from us, not for their *sublimity*, but their *usefulness*; for as God on the one hand remembers that we are but *flesh*, unable to bear the nearer approaches of *divinity*, and so talks with us as once with *Moses* through a cloud: So on the other he forgets not that *he breathed into us the breath of life*, a vital active spirit, whose motions he expects should own the dignity of its *original*, and as it was it self an *emanation* of the Essential Goodness, should aim at only *real* and *solid good*, and not evaporate and exhaust its powers in *mean* and *impertinent pursuits*. And upon this score also, he has found it necessary to hide many things from us, not that they would *dazle*, but *misemploy* our Eye; not *swallow* up our Understanding, but *divert* our Attention, from what is more important: Of this sort are those many thin *aerial speculations*, the certain knowledge whereof would bring *us* no real advantage, make us at all the wiser to Salvation; yet such a value does our *inquisitive Nature* set upon every thing for its being *hid*, that as if our Life were bound up with these Secrets, and all our Felicity dwelt in the Shade of these recesses, we pursue this search with indefatigable *industry*, ransack all corners with as great *diligence* as the *Woman* for her lost piece of Silver, *Luke* 15. 8. And as if this were indeed the *treasure* hid in the field, sell *all* that we have, lay out our whole *selves* upon the *purchace*. Indeed he that shall consider what solemn Disquisitions there are upon the slightest, and inconsiderablest Subjects, with what Advertence and concern Questions of this kind are bandied in the world, must wonder how men can at once be so *serious* and so *trifling*; or that those who can say *so much* should not once ask themselves to what purpose they say *any thing*. Yet what multitudes of men are there engag'd in such cases as this? When alas, the quarry is not worth half the toil, could it be gotten: But what *Solomon* says of the *sluggard*, *Prov.* 12. 27. that *he rosteth not that which he took in hunting*, is true of the contrary temper, these *over-busie spirits* whose labour is their only reward, they hunt a *shadow*, and chase the *wind*; and when they strain to their utmost speed, there is still the wonted Distance between *them* and their *aims*; all their eager pursuits bring them no acquist; but after they have traverst so much *ground*, traced all the *mazes*

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that learned Curiosity could contrive to perplex men, and studied to the weariness of the *flesh*, if not to the quenching of the *Spirit* too, they are still in the same *ignorance* from whence they set out, and 'twere well if they were also in the same *doubtfulness*: But the unhappiness of it is, they acquire a *confidence* without any *true ground* of it; and get such a Knowledge as may *puff up*, but not *edifie*. This was eminently exemplified in the *Gnosticks* of old, whose vain *Chimæras*, and *foolish questions*, as the *Apostle* calls them, *Tit.* 3. 9. past with them for such a *superlative wisdom*, as gave them Insolence to discriminate themselves from others by that swelling *Title*, and monopolize the reputation of *Science*, which yet if we will believe the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*, and he too brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, the greatest *Rabbi* of the *Jews*, was *science* falsly so called. And God knows, they want not successors in this as well as in other particulars; men are so possest with their own *Fancies*, that they take them for *Oracles*, and think they see visions, and are arrived to some Extraordinary *revelations* of Truth, when indeed they do but dream *dreams*, and amuse themselves with the Fantastick *Ideas* of a busie imagination. Yet would they only please themselves in the delusion, the Phrensie were more innocent; but like the prouder sort of *Lunaticks*, they will needs be *Kings* and *Rulers*, impose their wild *conjectures* for *Laws* upon others, and denounce *War* against all that receive them not. And this is that which makes the great combustion, and confusion among us; for while one man opines one way, another another, and each will obtrude his *opinion* on every body else: 'Tis impossible but the *contests* should be sharp and endless; for each man labours under a double Impatience, the *one* of having his own notions rejected, the other of having the quite contrary impos'd on him; and though 'tis true the *reciprocalness* of the Injury ought to allay the *displeasure* at it, yet men so much more consider what they *suffer* than what they *do*, that every one cries out aloud of that hard measure, which himself offers without regret. And between *winds* so contrary and so fierce, 'tis no wonder if *storms* arise; and in such *Tempests* has Religion so long been tossed, that it now needs the interposition of a divine *Miraculous power*, to keep it from sinking; for alas, these *skirmishes* expire not with the first Propugners of the Opinions; they perhaps began as *single Duellers*, but then they soon get their troops about them, have their *partisans* and *abetters*, who not only enhance, but entail the feud to posterity. And indeed this propagation of Strife, both in these *trifling* and the former more *profound* speculations, is the most fatal circumstance of the whole Case: Were it not for this, though we might have *many Errors*, we could have *no Sects*. And if the Church might be sometimes wounded with the *darts* of single Adversaries, yet she could not be surrounded and besieg'd with *combinations* and *confederacies*. Some straggling Souldiers might prove *renegadoes*, but they would not revolt in *troops* and *legions*. We should not have such numerous Parties, who with the greatest violation of Christian unity, denominate themselves, not from the *grand author and finisher of our Faith*; but from the *first broacher of their Idoliz'd opinions*. In the mean time, 'tis a sad contemplation, that a little *vain curiosity* should weigh so much, or the Churches *peace* so little with us: That we should sacrifice the one, to the *satisfaction*, shall I say, or rather to the *whetting* and *inflaming* of the other. But 'tis a yet sadder, that this should chiefly be done by those whose *learning* enables, and whose *profession* should devote to the most noble and most profitable Studies; nay, have the highest obligations to correct those *exorbitancies* in others,

which with ſuch *art* and *labour* they propagate and teach. How wounding a ſpectacle is it to ſee our greateſt *Heroes* like *Hercules* at the *Diſtaffe*, thus degenerouſly employed, and to find thoſe who were by Chriſt deſign'd for *fiſhers of Men*, thus entertain themſelves like *Children*, with *picking up Shells* and *Pebbles* on the ſhore; and which is yet more unmanly, *wrangling* about them too. Indeed at this rate, 'tis no wonder if they make the *diſciples* complaint, *We have travelled all night and have taken nothing.* This ſure is ſo little the way to win Souls, that he whoſe buſineſs it is to deſtroy them, can very contentedly refer them to this method; can gladly leave us all our nice and ſubtle *diſquiſitions*, upon the very ſame ſcore that one of the *Gothick* Commanders adviſed the ſparing of the *Italian Schools* and *Libraries*; Let us, ſays he, leave them their Books, that whilſt they amuſe themſelves with ſuch *follies*, we may ſubdue them at our *pleaſure*. It is the ſaying of the Wiſe man, *There is a wiſdom that multiplieth bitterneſs*; and ſure if there be a wiſdom acquired by theſe curious Enquiries, 'tis of this ſort, like the Knowledge of Good and Evil attained by our firſt Parents, which taught them to know the Good only by its *loſs*, and the Evil by its *ſmart*. Indeed our too high, and tranſcending *ſpeculations* on the one hand, and our too trivial and unprofitable on the other; are like the *torrid* and *frigid* Zones, the one conſumes us with its *heat*, the other chills, and benumns us with its *cold*; that turns us to *Cinders*, this to *Ice*. Theſe little trifling Notions being too ſlight an exerciſe to keep *heat* in our Chriſtianity, which not only expreſſes but maintains its *life* by ſtrong and vigorous Motions. And therefore between theſe *two intemperate*, God has provided us an *habitable Clime*, I mean that middle rank of divine truths which tend to practice. Here he would have us dwell and converſe, fix our thoughts and ſtudies: Nor need we fear that they are too dry a ſubject for our contemplation. We ſee as deep Speculators, as any now aſſume to be, found it far otherwiſe. *David* could entertain himſelf with the *Meditations of God's Law* (not his hidden Decrees or counſels) *all the day*, *Pſal.* 119. 97. Nay, it ſeems, the Matter was ſo *copious* and *redundant*, that it could not be confin'd within that *narrow boundary* of Time, but invaded the *night* alſo; forced him to defaulk from his *reſt*, to beſtow on his *meditations*, *I have thought of thy Name, O Lord, in the night ſeaſon, and have kept thy Law*, Verſe 55. Neither is it a vain expence of Time, which it thus tempts to, but gives the happieſt improvement; lands at that harbour to which all rational ſtudies tend, gives underſtanding, Verſe 130. *makes wiſe the ſimple*, *Pſal.* 19. 7. and this alſo in an eminent degree, ſuch as ſet him above his teachers, and his Elders alſo. *Thou through thy commandments haſt made me wiſer than mine Enemies. I have more underſtanding than my teachers, for thy teſtimonies are my ſtudy. I am wiſer than the aged, becauſe I keep thy commandments*, *Pſal.* 119. 98, 99, 100. Theſe are high and liberal Elogies of this divine ſtudy, and if any ſhall ſeek to divert an unwelcome inference by ſaying that *David* ſpoke them only in pious raptures, that they were the tranſport of his *zeal*, rather than the eſtimate of his *judgment*; we muſt reſolve the objector far removed from ſuch religious *exceſſes*, and under the contrary *defect*; yet the *cauſe* will ſo well bear an *appeal*, that he may be truſted to conſult farther; let him adviſe with *Solomon*, whoſe large deſires and poſſeſſions too of wiſdom, muſt ſuppoſe him no ſtranger to its nature, and he will tell him the very ſame, and that not in his *devouter ecſtaſies*, but in his moſt *compos'd ſedate temper*, when he ſolemnly ſeats himſelf in his School, reads *Ethicks* to his diſciples, and profeſſes his deſign

of

of giving *subtilty* to the simple, and to the young man *knowledge* and *discretion*, *Prov.* 1. 4. For if his whole book of *Proverbs* be scanned, the summ of it will be found to be nothing else but an *exhortation* to the study of this practick Wisdom. Nay when his own *understanding* was improv'd and advanc'd by *experience* also, when he had not only *begg'd* but *bought* wisdom, after he had given his Curiosity its full unbounded Range, compassed the whole Universe and examin'd not only in *contemplation*, but by sensitive *experiment*, whatever therein could pretend to be that good for the sons of Men, *Eccl.* 2. 3. we find after all this busie inquest, he gives up his *verdict* in this form, *Eccl.* 12. 13. Let us hear the end of the whole matter, *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the Whole Duty of Man:* And now methinks so solemn a decision of the wisest of Men, and he too inspir'd by the Omniscient God, may be thought of weight enough to acquiesce in. Yet since there are some who love not to weigh in the balance of the Sanctuary, and that had rather receive Responses from *Delphos* than from between the *Cherubims:* Let such at least hear even the Heathen Oracle attesting *Socrates* to be the wisest man, because he directed his studies to the *moral part* of Learning, which he did to such a degree, as to disparage all those more *Aiery speculations*, which better'd not mens Manners, but were only λόγων ψόφος, *a noise and clattering of Words.* And *Pythagoras* his School defines Philosophy, ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσιν καὶ τελείωσιν, *the cleansing and perfecting humane life*, which two things are said to be done, first by *Vertue*, whose business it is to remove τὴν ἀμετρίαν τῶν παθῶν, *the inordination of our Passions:* Secondly, by *Truth*, which restores θεῖον εἶδος, *the Image and pourtraicture of God.* And since this is the joynt suffrage both of Religion and Reason, why should those that pretend to either, defie both, and vainly consume themselves in unprofitable searches? Why should men wander to seek *beggary* and emptiness, who may with far less labour be *rich* at home? Alas, 'tis not *bare knowledge*, how great or universal soever, that can possess us of *felicity.* Were it possible for us to have a window into *Heaven*, to see all the Divine secrets, yet that might be but like the Rich mans prospect into *Abrahams* bosom, while himself was in the *bottomless pit.* They are not only the *gross* and *illiterate Souls* that must feed those *flames*, the most *Aerial* and *Sublimated* are rather the more proper fuel for an *immaterial Fire*, and the knowledge we carry thither, renders us the fitter company for him, who knew every thing but how to keep himself happy. It was once the Observation and Wonder of *Plutarch*, that whereas God has several *incommunicable properties*, as Power and Immortality, *&c.* these all men aspir'd to, in the mean time neglected that of *Goodness*, wherein he was willing all men should share. And sure there is now cause of the same complaint, we would have Omniscience and all parts of Divinity besides the holiness, yet alas, those without these would prove but fatal acquists, and that approach towards being *Gods*, would only make us the more *Devils.* The only advantagious as well as possible *way* of Assimilation with God is by *purity*, and the *means* of that an Attentive consideration of those *Divine revelations*, which are to regulate our practice; these at once dispense *light* and *warmth*, direct and revive the Soul: And if men would not exhale *vapours* to cloud and darken them, Eclipse the clearest Truths by *difficulties* of their own creating, no man could miss his way to Heaven for want of light, and yet so vain are they as to think they oblige the world by involving it in darkness, as if their *Mists* should like that *which Watered the new form'd Earth*, *Gen.* 2. 6. supply the place of the *dew* of Heaven. But certainly to all such in

their profusest liberalities, we need make no other Request than *Diogenes* did to *Alexander*, desire them only that they will not stand between *us* and the *Sun*, intercept its rays, and rob us of that which is infinitely better than any thing they can give us. Were this but obtain'd, we should soon discern the inconsiderableness of those things whose effects have been so sadly considerable to Christendom; those many *Chimæra*'s which we wrangle and fight about, would in this Sun-shine appear but *Motes* that dance in the Air, (though God knows as we manage them, they are the most luxurious Revels to the Prince that rules there.) Were but S. *Paul*'s doctrine throughly imbib'd, our Curious Arts, περίεργα γράμματα, *superfluous unconcerned studies*, would as it hapened, *Acts* 19. be supplanted; and our *devotion* if sufficiently accended, would as theirs, *burn up* innumerable *books* of this sort. And sure as this would be the *greatest*, so it would be the most *triumphant Bonfire* Christendom ever saw, as being not only an *indication*, but a *means* of the *mighty growth*, and prevailing of the Word of God, which our vain *Curiosities* serve only to impede and obstruct, while they do as mightily advance *dissentions* and *animosities* amongst men.

CHAP. XV.

A Survey of the Causes of Disputes; Thirdly, Interest.

Self-Interest is a third cause of our Divisions.

1. BUT besides these *two*, there is a *third* Fomenter of divisions, which either for its activity or success must not subscribe to either of them, and that is *Interest*. This is the great *Idol* to which the world bows: To this we pay our devoutest homage, give it not only our *knees*, but our *hearts*; and as if the making us rich were a *second* Creation, that could cancel all the obligations of the *first*, we sacrilegiously entitle our profit to all the Prerogatives of a Creator, give it an absolute unlimited dominion over us, allow it to prescribe us all our measures of good and evil; to rule not only our *Reason* but our *Passions* too, (a Soveraignty, alas, we would never yield to our God) and as if the *giving* us *laws* were not Empire enough, we permit it to impose *Religions* also; for sure they that observe how great an influence it has in *Church-affairs*, will conclude it governs more than the *secular* part of the world. And indeed if we look back, we shall find 'tis no *novel usurpation*, but though void of other Title, has the Prescription of *many ages*. Divinity has long since been made the handmaid of Policy, and Religions modelled by conveniencies of State. The golden *Calves* became venerable *deities*, when they were found apt to secure *Jeroboams* Jealousies: And *Machiavels* policy, that *States should serve themselves of Religion*, was a common practice long before 'twas his Rule. And this Example of Communities has been transcrib'd by single Persons. In the Old Testament we find frequent mention of those *mercenary* Prophets, that turn'd the *office* into a *trade*, divin'd for *money*, nay, sometimes for more contemptible hire, *handfuls of Barley* and *pieces of Bread*: And in the New we see the same motive of Secular advantage had force enough to turn an *Ecclesiastick* into a *Laick*, make *Demas* degrade himself, and desert his Ministry, and as it thus stopt his mouth from preaching the *Truth*, so it open'd those of Others to divulge *Errors*. Such were those deceivers of whom S. *Paul* speaks, *Tit.* 1. 11. *Who speak things they ought not for filthy lucres sake*. So when the same Apostle declaims the most earnestly against the *love of money as the root of all evil*, we find he fetches his proof of that Charge

Charge from its having *made men erre from the faith*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. And 'tis S. *Peter*'s prediction, that the moſt damnable Hereſies, even the *denying of the Lord that bought them*, ſhould be introduced by *thoſe*, who through Covetouſneſs ſhould make *merchandize* of their *Proſelytes*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. and ſure the *event* atteſts the *preſage* to have concern'd more than the Age immediately ſucceeding, there being none of the ſubſequent which hath not in ſome degree aſſiſted its completion; nor have we cauſe to wonder *hereat*, ſince 'tis obvious to diſcern the conjunction and dependence between Covetouſneſs and Hereſie. For the *Itching ears*, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, being an *Epidemick diſeaſe*, give fair opportunity to every *Mountebank* to try his *Experiments*. When men nauſeate *Old* truths, becauſe they are acquainted with them, and embrace doctrines for the very ſame reaſon, they ſhould reject them, even becauſe they are *New*: When they love no Teachers, but ſuch as thus entertain them, and are bountiful to none but ſuch as they love; there is little doubt, but there will be *Mints* enough ſet on work, when the *Coiners* can thus at once *ſtamp new opinions* for their Diſciples, and *Money* for themſelves: And God knows they are not a *few* of our Diviſions, that have thence taken *birth*. It will be needleſs to ravel far into the Records of Elder times, every mans memory will be able to ſuggeſt to him too many, and too pertinent inſtances. Upon which reflection 'twill be too viſible, that much of ſome mens late pretence to *Godlineſs* was but a real purſuit of *Gain*; and the *new light* ſerv'd to guide them to their *neighbours Coffers*: And probably many of our Diſputes had been ſuperſeded, had not the Authors foreſeen, that though they loſt the Queſtion, they ſhould gain what they more ſought. A few eſſays had diſcover'd how much the *Populacy* were pleas'd with *Novelties*, eſpecially ſuch as at once gratified their *Levity* and their *Pride*, by caſting ill reflections on the things or Perſons to whom they owned a reverence; and the *liberal contributions* ſuch Teachers met with, ſerv'd ſtill to invite more *labourers* into that *work*, where without the uneaſineſs of a long Expectation, their very *ſeed-time* was their *Harveſt*, and by ſowing *Tares*, they immediately reaped *Gold*; And 'tis no wonder if ſuch *quick returns* made them *diligent* at the trade, induſtrious to provide thoſe wares they ſaw they could put off ſo well. And would to God we were ſecure, that *this way* of Traffick were yet at an end, for ſo long as theſe *ſpiritual Merchants* can thus impoſe on their *credulous Chapmen*, make them buy one miſchief with another, and exhauſt their *Eſtates* to endanger their *Souls*, we muſt not hope our *diſſentions* will ever ceaſe, our *flames* ever be extinct, that have ſo much *matter* to feed them, and ſuch *importunate blaſts* to blow them up.

The contentions about Religion are in a great meaſure kept up and promoted through Covetouſneſs;

2. But *covetouſneſs* is of too unſatiable a nature to be contented with one way of ſupply, 'tis like the *Sea*, that receives the Tribute of *all Rivers* (though far unlike it in lending any back again) and therefore thoſe who have reſolv'd upon the *thriving ſort* of Piety, have ſeldom embarkt all their *hopes* in one *bottom*, nor ſo depended on the *bounty* of their Proſelytes, as to neglect other *ways of preying* for themſelves. They wanted not providence to foreſee, how uncertain a revenue popular benevolence is: That the ſame giddy and violent *humour*, which had opened their hands *ſo wide*, might by working another way cloſe them *as faſt*; or if their *inclinations* continued, their *abilities* might fail; (a thing very poſſible to thoſe, who have ſuch ſuckers) or if both theſe remain'd, yet that they were unlikely to grow in proportion to their own appetites, and therefore found it neceſſary to have ſome other reſerve; and beſides, this way of *flattering* their willing *benefactors* out of part, contriv'd another of *forcing* their unwilling

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Neighbours out of all their *poſſeſſions*: So making the ſpoils of ſome mens *honeſty* a richer booty than that of others *folly*. Hence *Shiboleths* found out of Covenants and Engagements, to give opportunity of deſtroying a diſſenting brother; by this Art a *fat benefice* became *crime* and *witneſs* too againſt its Incumbent, and he was ſure to be *unorthodox*, that was worth the *plundering*. Thus alas, has the *Altar* of God been attended, or rather invaded by thoſe whoſe very *approach* was a *guilt*, that qualified them rather to lay hold on its *horns*, than pretend to its *ſervice*; for ſure that God, who has declar'd he hates *robbery* for *burnt-offering*, cannot much affect *Robbers* for *Prieſts*. But this is a Theme ſo unpleaſant, I delight not to enlarge on it, and rather wiſh that the memory of it were ſo extinct, that it might remain no where but in the penitential Litanies of the Offenders; my deſign in the preſent reflection is only to make it an evidence how much *covetouſneſs* promotes our *contentions*, which ſure is not more viſible any where than in this inſtance: For where there is a deſign of ſupplanting, that neceſſarily requires another of accuſing; (even *Jezebel* her ſelf projects not to ſeize on *Naboths* Vineyard without a precedent *Charge*) to comply with which neceſſity, not only the *lives* and *converſations*, but the *doctrines* and *opinions* of our moſt eminent Divines have been ſtrangely miſrepreſented, and when that proved not *fence* enough to the *reputation* of their Oppreſſors, they have thought fit to change the *Scene*, and to combate thoſe *opinions* in their *true ſhape*, upon which they could not ſo well faſten their *diſguiſe*. I ſhall not here need to ſay with how much, or how little pretext of reaſon they managed thoſe Diſputes: 'Tis enough to my purpoſe that ſuch Diſputes there were, and thoſe founded in the deſire of acquiring ſecular advantages, which ſufficiently atteſts *Intereſt* to be a potent *Abettor* of our quarrels.

which appears in the diſturbances given the Church (by Anabaptiſts) abroad.

3. But God knows that is a truth of which the *world* affords ſo many proofs, that we need not confine our ſelves to this little *Angle* of it, or owe our *convictions* only to our *domeſtick tranſactions*; if we look abroad we ſhall find it too often exemplified. The memorable *diſturbance* given to the Church, as well as State of *Germany* by the *Anabaptiſts*, is a pregnant inſtance; whoſe *new opinion* was but an expedient of inveſting themſelves in *new poſſeſſions*, and their *ſecond Baptiſm* but the Solemnity of eſpouſing, not only the *fleſh*, but the *world* alſo, which they had renounced in the *firſt*.

The opinions of many of our Sects are wholly ſubſervient to their worldly intereſt.

4. And would God they had been the only Sect of Men, whoſe *doctrines* were ſubſervient to their *intereſts*; for ſuch tumultuous and *Plebeian projects*, though like a *land-floud* they make great ſpoil at the preſent, yet ſoon ſink again. Such avowed and *exceſſive greedineſs* devours *it ſelf*, and the *inſtruments* by which it wrought: So that the *defeat* of the ſecular Deſign, is commonly the *routing* thoſe Opinions, which were formed for the promoting it. But when the ſame deſire has the advantage of a ſober guidance; when *Avarice* puts on the *Canonical habit*, and twiſts it ſelf not only with the *practice* of Men, but the *doctrines* of the Church; when *Articles* of Religion ſhall be eſtimated by their *profitableneſs*, and Eccleſiaſticks *diſpute*, as Lay-men *fight for Money*: Then alas, the *miſchief* ſeems fatal, the *diſeaſe* ſo fixt and radicated, as at once diſcourages, and mocks the attempts of *cure*.

The Religion of the Romiſh Church is chiefly calculated for the ends of Covetouſneſs and Ambition,

5. That this is the caſe not only in a *particular* and *private* Church, but that which aſſumes to be the *Univerſal* and *Catholick*, is too apparent. The one Poſition of the Popes right to diſpoſe Kingdoms, out-ſtrips all other principles of rapine: This is to drive a *whole-ſale* trade, when all other petty Merchants deal but for *parcels*: Which as it is a much *bolder*,

ſo

so is it a more *prejudicial* attempt than the invading of private possessions, and these *Duo gladii*, the double armature of S. *Peter*, a more destructive Engin, than the tumultuary weapon snatcht up by a *Fanatick*: but sure S. *Peter's sword* though once rashly managed by himself, was never design'd to arm his *successors* to invade Kingdoms: This *property* of it seems rather to have been deriv'd from the *Prætorian Soldiers*, who insolently assumed the disposing of the Empire, wherein they at the last arrived to that *impudence*, that after the Death of *Pertinax* they made *open portsale* of it, αἰσχρῶς καὶ ἀτίμως, ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἰδιωτικῶς κειμηλίων, *in a base and sordid manner, as if it had been of common marketable wares*: I cannot say the Court of *Rome* transcribes that indecent owning of the traffick; but it has in other instances so well attested its good managery, that 'tis not very credible, that Crowns and Scepters are conferred *gratis*. And to *this* so advantageous a Doctrine *others* bear proportion: Those of *Purgatory*, *Indulgences*, and *Supererogation*, are ready instances, wherein the *Assertors* themselves seem to be unanimous in nothing but in a joynt reference to profit; for when they come to minute definitions they vary and disagree; satisfie one another, as little as their common *Antagonists*: And therefore in the Council of *Trent* they prudently chose in their decrees to propose the bare *Articles* backt by the Authority of the Church, and *Anathema's* of the Council, as having by precedent *discussions* of the points in their congregations discern'd the small *accord* that was among themselves, when they descended to *particulars*. And indeed the *Opinions* were so various as to the grounds of the Doctrines, that one would wonder how from so differing *premises*, they should all infer the same *conclusion*; were it not that the *conspiration* of Interest was too potent for the *diversity* of Judgment. And sure 'twas a strange deference was given to it, when in the matter of *Indulgences*, there was (by the Testimony of their own Writers) four *different* Opinions, and yet all *Catholick*: Which moderation towards *Speculative* Dissenters, compar'd with the great severity against those that opposed its *Practice*, speaks loud enough that the *Orthodoxy* of the point lay wholly in the *Profitableness*; and that *Luther* himself had been no *Heretick*, had he busied himself only in such disquisitions, as impeded not the *gain* of that Doctrine. Nor is this merely surmise and conjecture, for if we consult the *memorials* of those transactions, we shall find *this* was the thing that most alarm'd *Rome*, put that Court in almost as great a *commotion*, as the *birth* of Christ did *Herods*: And accordingly in their private consults, the closer *cabals* of the Colledge, the *securing* this part of their invaded treasure was the grand *deliberation*; upon which account it was, that when *Adrian* shewed some Inclination to the reforming abuses both in this and other instances, one of his *Cardinals* who better knew the intrigues of affairs, admonisht him against that unskilful piece of *Ingenuity*, not only from the example of his *Predecessors*, who were resolute never to confess Faults by *mending* them, but by *representing* to him, "That no *reformation* could be made, which would not no-"tably diminish the *rents* of the Church, which having four foundations, "the one *Temporal*, the other three *Spiritual*, Indulgences, Dispensations, "and Collations of *Benefices*; no one of them could be stopped, but that "one quarter of the revenues would be cut off. What a resemblance this advice carries to the oration of *Demetrius* to his fellow crafts-men, *Acts* 19. 25. I need not stand to demonstrate, but while such considerations as this, bear sway in Church matters, where *Profit* shall be the *Touchstone* both for faith and manners, we are not to wonder if no *gainful Tenet* be deposited; or *Peace* bought with that which in most mens esteem is of far more value.

6. And

which renders the differences between her and us Irreconcilable.

6. And this is it which ominates sadly as to our divisions with the *Romanists*, were our *differences* merely the product of Heat and Passion, they would like the *smaller clefts* in the ground, want nothing but a *cooler season* to cement and close them: But when they are thus form'd into an *interest*, become the Design not of *single persons* or *ages*, but of *corporations* and *successions*; the Breach seems like the *sciſſures* and *ruptures* of an Earthquake, and threatens to swallow all that attempt to close it, and reserves its cure only for omnipotence. Indeed till *spiritual* and *secular* Concerns be reduced into their proper ranks, which are now mixt and confounded, the better to disguise the prepostrous subordination of the nobler to the inferiour; till we have forgotten the unhappy *Chymistry* of turning *all*, even *Religion* it self *into Gold*, we must never hope to get out of the *Furnace*; our *flames* will still grow fiercer, and with this unnatural *effect* to consume not the *Dross*, but the purer *Metal*. In a word, till men can sever themselves from their *Avarice* and mean pursuits of gain, they will never cease to separate from their *brethren*. For as the most *soveraign Balsams* cannot cure a hurt while the *arrow* remains in the flesh: So neither can the most *pacifick Remedies* at all avail, so long as the same *worldly Aims*, which made the wound, still stick in it.

The sacrilegious spoils of our Church is owing to the covetousness of our late Reformers.

7. But in the mean time 'tis a *Melancholick* consideration that Christianity should be by its Professors thus unworthily prostituted; that the many various and opposite Religions, for which we severally pretend so much zeal, should be but divers ways to the same irreligious End; wherein our *Elders* seem to resemble those in the Story of *Susanna*, who when they meant to *part* with each other, yet did unawares meet by the impulse of the same Lust. We find, it moved the *patience* even of the *Lamb of God*, to see his Fathers *house* made a house of *merchandize*, though the Traffick was for the furnishing of Sacrifices: With what abhorrence must we think does he now behold those, who drive so much a worse trade in it: Who sell not *accommodations* for worship, but the *worship* it self to accommodate their *interests*, and do not only make Gain *in* the Temple, but *of* it? A thing the sacrilegious Rapine of our days has made literally true, where besides the *revenues*, the very *fabrick* and *materials* of Churches, have been *marketable ware*: *Judas*'s good husbandry has been taken up, and *ad quid Perditio hæc?* put as the *common Motto* upon every thing that could be sold for *more*, nay sometimes for *less* than *Three hundred pence*. And as *Dionysius* took away the golden beard from *Æsculapius*, to rectifie the indecency of the Sons having a beard when the Father had none: And *Julian* robb'd the Christian Altars with this *impious Sarcasm*, ἐν ποίοις σκεύεσιν ὑπερπίπτει ὁ Μαρίας υἱός; that *'twas unfit the Son of Mary should be serv'd in Plate*. So do men now a-days make themselves *regulators* of holy things, correct the *indecorums* of the Sanctuary, that they may rifle its *treasures*. Thus do we see the Apostles affirmation sadly verified, that *those who will be rich fall into Temptation, and a snare*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. Such is the greediness of a *covetous appetite*, that it swallows indiscriminately whatever looks like *prize*, and rather than it want its prey, God *Himself* shall be *robb'd*. Nay, 'twere to be wisht in this instance, that That were all; but alas, he is *mockt* too, used not only *unjustly*, but *contumeliously*; we thus make him a property to our sordid designs, and when he has profest that he will not be serv'd together with *Mammon*, we attempt that which is yet far more blasphemous, and make him pay service to him with whom he disdains to share it when paid by others.

8. Neither

8. Neither is Covetouſneſs the only *Vice* that ſerves its intereſt upon Religion: But as 'tis made a *factor* for that, ſo it is a *cloak* and *diſguiſe* for many other. Of this the Catalogues of primitive *Hereticks* give ſufficient witneſs; divers whereof as the *Nicolaitans*, *Cerinthians*, *Carpocratians*, and *Gnoſticks* ſeem to have conſtituted diſtinct Sects in *Chriſtianity*, only that they might introduce the moſt beſtial parts of *Heatheniſm*, and pretend an aſſociation in *Religion*, when indeed it was in *luſt*. How far ſome of our modern Sects reſemble them in this Particular, I will not undertake to pronounce: Though there want not thoſe who make *ſevere*, and not *improbable* Conjectures concerning it. But whether that be the main deſign or no; 'tis certain both that wickedneſs, and many other find great ſhelter among them. He that brings *reſolution* to uphold a Faction ſhall not miſs of *Entertainment*, how many or how great vices ſoever he brings with it; and *he* that is of a *godly party*, ſhall in ſpight of the loudeſt Guilts be a *godly man*. So *meritorious* a thing is it in ſome mens account to be *factious*, that *it covers the multitude of ſins*: Hence it is that *Criminals* ſo frequently fly to new Churches for *Sanctuary*: And 'twill ſtill be the concern of ſuch to have ſo creditable a *Refuge*; and therefore we are not to wonder if *this* Intereſt combine with the *former* in promoting our Diſſentions.

Religion is too commonly made uſe of to ſerve a baſe luſt and vile end;

9. But alas, as it advances *thoſe*, ſo does it our *guilt* too, that have more than one vile end to which we accommodate our Piety: And ſtill implies the greater *affront* to our God, by how many the more and baſer *intereſts* we ſhroud under his Patronage. Alas, is it not enough, as *Job* ſpeaks, *to hide our iniquities in our own boſoms*, but muſt we wrap them in the *Veil* of the *Sanctuary*? We read that *Goats* once lent a *covering* for the Tabernacle; but here by an impious Inverſion, the *Tabernacle* muſt lend a *covering* to the Goats: The moſt *beſtial appetites* be both concealed and preſerved under the *Shadow* of Religion. *Plutarch* tells us, that when *Marcellus* would have conſecrated a *Temple* joyntly to Honour and Virtue, the *Prieſts* reſiſted it, ſaying, *two Gods dwelt not in one Church:* And if their *vain deities* exacted ſuch a ſolemnity of Reſpect, and would not be Inmates to *one another*, can we think the *true God* will be content to be made ſo to all our *vileſt luſts*? This is ſure the higheſt Contumely to the divine Majeſty; and never could the *abomination of deſolation* more properly be ſaid to ſtand in the *holy place* than in *this ſence*: For as the *natures* of theſe Guilts are fitly expreſt by *abomination*, ſo is the *effect* of them by *deſolation*; they having brought the moſt *fatal miſchiefs* on the Church.

10. And now would God all that are concern'd in this guilt, would ſoberly ponder the weight of it. There are *two things* of which God has expreſt himſelf peculiarly Tender, his *honour* and his *Church*; this is the invading him in both; the expoſing the *one* to Reproach and Contempt, and the *other* to Ruine and Deſtruction; and doubtleſs were there nothing of the *former*, this *latter* alone muſt be ſadly accounted for. It remains yet a Character of infamy upon *Achan*, that he troubled *Iſrael* to enrich himſelf: And on *Balaam*, that *he not only loved the wages of iniquity*, but *enſnared the people in uncleanneſs*: And ſure the ſame with many aggravations belongs to thoſe, who by the like unworthy practice, have not only rendred the Church a prey to *Foreigners*, but made it ſo to *it ſelf*; engag'd one part of it againſt another, till the whole is ſo waſted, that our *Religion* ſeems now nearer extinction, than our *quarrels* about it.

the guilt whereof I ought ſeriouſly to be weighed and ponder'd by us all.

CHAP. XVI.

A Survey of the Causes of Disputes; Fourthly, Passion.

Passion a fourth cause of our Divisions.

1. A FOURTH grand contributer to our dissentions is *Passion*, which being by God and nature placed in a subserviency to reason, when it quits its *proper station* and assumes *Empire*, it must needs disorder and subvert not only the State of the *Mind*, but of *every thing* upon which it has an Influence. I shall not here attempt any *Philosophical* discourse either of their *nature* or *number*; all that concerns the present enquiry falls under one of these two, our *love*, or our *hate*; and is either Kindness and Prepossession, or Spight and Prejudice: For the *first* of these 'tis a thing which *common experience* attests to be a most forcible corrupter of the understanding, which being by native right design'd a *Judge*, is by this interrupted in its *office*, not permitted to make those impartial Enquiries, on which a right *sentence* should be founded: But (as it fares sometimes with *Magistrates* in Popular insurrections) forced to give countenance to its own *violation*, to own not its proper native dictates, but such as are presented to it, by the prejudicate Fancy. And as it thus lays restraint upon the *superiour* part of the Mind, keeps the understanding in fetters, so (to complete the inversion) it takes off all ties from the *inferiour:* Gives not only *licence*, but *incitation* to the other Passions to take their freest range, to act with the utmost impetuosity. And sure there can nothing more be requir'd, to render it a most apt *instrument* of Tumult and Confusion. For when every *opinion* that is taken up, shall instead of *reason* and *argument*, arm it self with *heat* and *violence*, there can be no end of contending. And the truth of this is, God knows, too sadly discernible in our *Church-controversies*, which derive a great deal of their *warmth* and *bitterness* from this Fountain.

Prepossession and Kindness to mens persons and doctrines hath given countenance to many ancient Errors.

2. Of this prepossession there are two Sorts, the one relating to *Doctrine*, the other to *Persons*; by the first I mean not a sober constancy to those principles which being first imbibed by *education*, are afterwards retain'd upon *Judgment*, but an eager *tenacity* of Opinions, not so much upon *Truth* or *Evidence*, as upon a confus'd irrational *kindness*; a *Platonick love* of some Doctrines merely for themselves, and then making them the *standards*, by which all others are to be measured: And this kind of Prepossession is no Stranger in the world, there being multitudes of men, who assert opinions with all imaginable vehemence, who can give no better ground of it, but because they like them: And as the wiser sort *chuse* a Tenet, because 'tis *right*, so these conclude 'tis *right*, because they have *chosen* it. And having thus enamour'd themselves of their *Helena*, they expect all should adore, nor can he escape the note of Profaneness that refuses. By this absurd partiality it is, that some *doctrines*, which would themselves ill abide the *Test*, are become the *Touch-stone* both of Doctrines and Men, and no Opinion or Person sanctified which bears not this impress. I need not stand to give instances, either of the *Doctrines* or the unhappy *influence* this espousing of them has had on our dissentions; but indeed this kind of *Prepossession* is oftentimes the *consequent* of another; and this great *veneration* of some Opinions is founded in the *reverence* of their Authors. Men take up a confidence of the *learning* or *sanctity* of a Person, and then all his *notions* are received implicitly, strictly embraced, but not so much as slightly examined, and this *admiration* of mens Persons, has in all ages been of huge

huge *mischief* to the Church, has nurst up *private* Fancies into solemn *publick* Errors, and given an unhappy perpetuity to many *Heterodox opinions*, which would else have expired with their *first propugners*. This seems to have been foreseen by S. *Paul*, when he so earnestly exhorts the *Corinthians* against the ascribing their *Faith* to their several respective *Teachers*: But sure I am, 'twas sadly experimented by the *succeeding Christians*, who owed many of their *divisions* to it. A pregnant instance hereof was the *Millennium*, which in spight of its improbability prevail'd *long*, and almost *universally* against the *Truth* upon the strength of *Authority*. *Papias* a holy man and Scholar of S. *John*, having delivered it, the *esteem* of his Person canoniz'd his *mistake*, and men chose rather to admit a *doctrine*, whose unagreeableness to the Gospel-Oeconomy rendred it suspicious, than think an *Apostolick man* could seduce them. And the force of this is yet more considerable, when 'tis remembred that it found *proselytes*, not only among the *Vulgar*, who are commonly flexible to any new Impression, but among those of a *higher rank*, men that were *lights* in their generation: *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus* having own'd the *Opinion*, and intimated it to have been received by many others no less *Orthodox*; and if such a seduction could prevail, so early in those purer times, before mens interests or spleen were adopted into their Religion, and begot voluntary errors, if I say the *mere reputation* of a Teacher was then singly so operative; we cannot wonder at its efficacy in conjunction with those *auxiliaries*, which worser times have brought in. What concurrence of those there was in the several *Heresies*, which after infested the *Church*, I shall not now examine, but 'tis visible that many of them grew considerable, chiefly from the *fame* of their Authors; thus *Tatianus* upon the credit of being *Justin Martyr*'s disciple, had an advantage to disseminate his errors, and not only his, but those of *Origen*, *Apollinaris* and *Novatus*, gain'd abettors from the *reputed Orthodoxy* of the Persons that propos'd them, who having asserted the Faith in *some* points, were qualified the more prosperously to oppose it in *others*.

Many blindly give up their Faith and Conscience to the conduct of their admir'd Teachers.

3. Nor has it been only the mishap of elder times to have felt the mischiefs of such prepossession; the *disease* has still advanced, and every day improved in worse *effects* by how much men have more degenerated from *primitive integrity*; so that the *easie Proselyte* is now in danger, not only from the *blindness*, but the *treachery* of his guide, and is often led out of the *common road*, as *thieves* draw passengers into *by-ways* for the better opportunity of robbing them: But 'tis not my present business to send *Hue and cry* after them, to examine what the intentions of those *leaders* are, who misguide their tractable admiring *followers*: 'Tis enough for my purpose to observe, that those who so deliver up themselves in a blind assent to the dictates of any man, are in his power to be abused by him if he pleases: I shall leave it to others, to estimate the *probability* that they shall not be actually so: But certainly this may be said, that these *later* ages have beyond all the *former* given Opportunities of seducing to any that will use them. The one establisht Doctrine of *infallibility* among the *Romanists* is eminent for its propriety that way, while under pretence of *submission* to something they call *Infallible*, 'tis evident that the *faith* of the ignorant Vulgar resolves it self into that which they acknowledge most *fallible*; the Doctrine of their immediate Teachers. But indeed take it at the best, such a *persuasion* is not only an *error* in it self, and an apt *foundation* for innumerable others, but it necessarily renders them incorrigible; the least retractation of a *mistake* being so inconsistent with the claim of *infallibility*, that while they retain the *one*, they must never attempt the *other*, nor can they cease to

Erre, till they confeſs it poſſible they may do ſo. How much more than poſſible that has been, the many Innovations of that Church ſufficiently witneſs; and conſequently the danger of preſuming upon the unerrableneſs of a guide. But would all that *upbraid* it there, were themſelves *ſecure* from it, and that many did not in their practice tranſcribe that *decried doctrine*, and that too with the improvement of worſe *circumſtances*. I muſt call them *worſe*, by how much the *probabilities* of Erring are *greater* under the extemporary conduct of a *Private perſon*, than the fixt rules of a *community*, and by how much again the voluntary enſlaving my ſelf is more excuſeleſs, than that which the principles of my Profeſſion, and conſequently a ſeeming obligation of Conſcience expoſes me to. And as to the matter of Fact, I think 'tis evident enough, that the *admiration* of mens Perſons is a *ſpreading diſeaſe* that has over-run Chriſtendom; and though a great part of it inveigh againſt *implicit faith*, yet if it be throughly ſcanned, 'twill appear 'tis rather the *object* than the *act* we differ about. He that vehemently oppoſes that homage to the *Conclave*, will yet tamely pay it to a *Claſſis*: And he that refuſes it there, yields it to the Votes of a *Congregational Church*; or if he hold out againſt that too, yet chuſes to himſelf ſome *private Teacher* on which to caſt it: Like *Micah*, *Judg.* 16. *Makes him a Teraphim and a Prieſt too, for his private uſe*; and then confidently conſults his *Oracle*, and has nothing to do but believe its *reſponſes*. Nay, that which makes the matter yet more ſadly ridiculous, is that the very Oppoſition to *one* Uſurpation makes them deliver themſelves up to *another*. How many, when they have heard a *Preacher* rail fiercely at the *Pope*, have preſently made him *theirs*, and ſuppoſing that Zeal an *indication of a ſafe guide*, have given him as *abſolute a rule* of their Conſciences, as that he exclaim'd againſt (perhaps Envied) elſewhere? And the like inſtances might be given among our other diſſenting parties. And this has taught ſome Seducers a lucky artifice, made them obſerve to what opinions their Proſelytes had the greateſt averſion, and by complying with their *anger* ſo ſteal away their *love*, that they might after lead them to what they *pleas'd*, yea, perhaps to that which they ſo much deteſted: For there want not examples of ſome, who have by back ways been brought to thoſe Opinions, which at firſt they moſt defied. What have been the *attempts* or *ſucceſs* of the Emiſſaries of *Rome* this way, I ſhall not pronounce, though ſome (not improbably) ſpeak them *great*.

and chuſe to denominate themſelves from the name of a particular Sect, as if they were aſhamed of that of Chriſtian.

4. From this blind and paſſionate *eſteem* of ſeveral Teachers have flowed many *pernicious conſequents*, particularly thoſe diſtinct Appellations, which form *differences* into *Sects*, many of which expreſly own *this original*, by bearing the names of their *firſt Authors*. I might here put them in mind, that they are *illegitimate perſons*, whom our Law directs to write with an *alias*, and ask them, *Whether the Church from their ſuperinduced name, has not cauſe ſo to repute them.* But I am ſure I may with the utmoſt ſerioufneſs ſay, that this *practice* is to the great *violation* of Chriſtian unity, and *reproach* of Chriſtian profeſſion, which ſeems to be abandon'd and diſown'd by us, who inſtead of denominating our ſelves from *the Author and finiſher of our Faith*, find out *new Patrons*, as if we were aſham'd of our *firſt Relation*. Alas, how is the title of *Chriſtian*, which was ſo *glorious* to the *Primitive owners*, that they gladly bought the occaſion of boaſting it with Torments and Death, become ſo *deſpicable* to *us*, that every the obſcureſt name is courted to ſupplant it! Have any of our *Idolized readers* bought their intereſt in us ſo dear as *Chriſt* has done, why then are we rather ambitious to be accounted their *dependents* than *his*? 'Tis the *Apoſtles* own argument,

1 *Cor.*

1 *Cor.* 1. 13. when he refutes their factious entituling themselves to *Paul* and *Apollo*, &c. by asking them if *Paul* were crucified for them: And indeed he there says so much upon this point, that I need only refer the Reader thither to learn, either the *unreasonableness* of this Schismatical zeal for our several Teachers, or the *inevitable contentions* and *animosities* which spring from it; only let me observe, that every of his Arguments are more pressing upon *us*, than on the *Corinthians*; those taken from the unreasonableness sure are, by how much the *names* we so adore are less venerable than those of *Paul* and *Cephas* and *Apollo*; and those from the consequences are so also. For those Teachers were industrious to *prevent*, whereas ours commonly are no less busie to *promote contentions* on their behalf, and so we are more ascertain'd never to want them.

5. But beside this *kinder* prepossession towards some mens persons, there is another of a different nature, a *sinister* one. I mean *prejudice* and *disgust*; and *this* has done no less harm in Ecclesiastical affairs than the *former*. Men take up *piques* and *displeasures* at others, and then every *opinion* of the disliked person must partake of his *fate*, and be engaged in the *quarrel*: Nor will those that are enemies ever allow one another the honour of being in the right: Nay, some have been so perversly *malicious*, that they have given up their *understandings* to their *spleen*, forsaken an Opinion themselves approved, only that they might find matter of contest with one they maligned. A memorable instance of this *Socrates* gives in his *Eccl. Hist.* in *Theophilus*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, who having formerly attested the Orthodox belief, that God was incorporeal; yet upon a sudden indignation against *Dioscorus* and his brethren, who maintained the Tenet, he embraced the contrary Heresie of the *Anthropomorphites*, that so under the Colour of a difference in *faith*, he might the more advantageously pursue his *malice*; and the Effects of it were very Tragical, not only to *private persons* in Tumult and Bloud-shed, but to the *Church* by reviving that Error, which was before near expiring, and might as *Socrates* affirms, have lain in the dust, had it not been thus awaken'd. And indeed in Church-story scarce any thing occurs more frequently than examples of those, who upon private grudges have either begun or fomented Heresies and Schisms. Thus *Marcion* being denied the Communion of the *Roman* Church, having before by a *scandalous crime* been cut off from his own, he reveng'd himself by publishing his *detestable doctrine*: In like manner *Miletius* upon a displeasure at *Peter* Bishop of *Alexandria*, first separated from the *Church*, and after took part with the *Arians*: So also *Lucifer* incensed at *Eusebius* for not approving of his Electing *Paulus* to the See of *Antioch*, broke Communion, and gave both rise and denomination to a new *Sect*. The like is said of *Apollinaris*, that he was excited to the broaching his *Heresie* by his impatience of the Excommunication inflicted on him and his Father, by *Theodotus* Bishop of *Laodicea*; and several others might be given to the same purpose, out of the Records of those first Ages.

Prejudice and dislike hath likewise given Birth to many Heresies in the Church,

6. And certainly the World seems not to have so much improved in *meekness* since, as that we should think the same *principle* is not still as *active*; and if the Task were not more envious than hard, many recent instances migh be given to Parallel the former, especially of such as having justly smarted *under* the stroke of *Ecclesiastical discipline*, have fought to revenge themselves both *on it* and *the inflictors*, by Factions and Tumults; so making the *publick* at once cloak the infamy, and bear the charge of their *particular* rancours. But this is a Subject neither grateful nor necessary to be more distinctly spoken to. One may however in the general say,

and hath mightily inflam'd our present differences and dissentions.

that

that where these private Animosities are any thing *violent*, they usually beat down all Consideration of *publick good*. *Historians* observe of *Themistocles*, that he always thwarted the Counsels of *Aristides*, not that he thought it the Interest of the *Commonwealth*, but *his own*, to keep down the growing reputation of his Competitor: And I fear that envious artifice has been too often transcrib'd, as well in *Ecclesiastick*, as in *Civil* Transactions: No *detriment* is thought so formidable to a malicious mind, as the *prosperity* of his Adversary; and publick Ruptures shall still be allowed to widen, till they swallow up the whole, rather than he will close with his Antagonist. The History of the *Scottish Church* gives an apposite Example of this in a *ruling Presbyter*, who being by King *James* advis'd with about the re-admitting Marques *Huntley*, and prest with the present exigencies of Church and State, which requir'd it, gave his *final answer* in these terms: *Well Sir, I see you resolve to take* Huntley *in favour, if you do, I will oppose it, chuse whether you will lose him or me, for both you cannot have.* Some may think the greatest propriety of this instance lies to shew the *insolence* of that Tribe towards *Majesty*; but however 'tis not impertinent to the matter in hand also; and shews how light the greatest *publick concerns* are, when *malice* is the counterpoize: And indeed the *Naturalists* experiment, that *flame* will not mingle with *flame*, never justifies it self better than when applied to minds thus accended, which however they may *meet* in mutual flashes, can never *unite* and *incorporate*: The sadness of it is, that they should only conspire to *common vastation*, and make the Church it self a *burnt-offering*.

Our Passions have been fatal both to our Church and Religion.

7. Thus fatal have our several sorts of prepossessions been to our Religion, for as if that were the *common Enemy*, our most distant contrary Affections, our *love* and our *hate* equally annoy it; those brutish parts of us our *Passions*, which like the *beasts* under the Law, were never to be brought into the *Temple*, but for *sacrifice*, are *now* found there upon a far differing account, not to be *slain*, but *ador'd*; like the *Ægyptian Isis* and *Osyris*, enshrin'd to receive our *Devotions*; for that the Zeal we pretend elsewhere is really paid to them, is alas, too manifest.

CHAP. XVII.

A Survey of the Causes of Disputes; Fifthly, Zeal.

Mistaken zeal hath been another cause of our Breaches and Divisions,

1. TO these several causes of our distractions we may add another, which though in its *original* it may seem more *innocent*, yet is in its *consequents* no less *pernicious*, and that is a *mistaken Zeal*; which as it is *fire* to all about it, so is it *wind* to it self, fanns and irritates its own *flames*, and by a confidence that it does *well*, gathers still fresh vigour to do *more*. How great the force of such an Erroneous perswasion is, we may collect from our Saviours premonition to his Disciples, when he tells them, that *those who kill'd them should think they did God service*; and if *Murder*, and that of *Apostles* too, could by the *Magick* of blind Zeal be so transform'd, we must not wonder to find other *Crimes* so too. And what *Christ* thus foretold was after eminently exemplified in S. *Paul*, whom the Holy Writ represents under all the Phrases that may denote a virulent *persecutor*, as breathing out *threatnings* and *slaughter*, making havock of the Church, and in his own words, *Persecuting that way unto the Death*, and being exceedingly mad against them; and all this he did being Zealous towards God, and out of a *perswasion* that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of

of *Jesus*, as we find in his *Apologie* to his country-men and King *Agrippa*, *Acts* 22. 2. & 26. 9.

and lead to several extravagant pieces of superstition.

2. And of the abettors of those Novel doctrines which after-times produced, we have reason to think many were of this Sort, especially in those Heresies, which though they carried *secret venome* in them, had yet a *plausible appearance* of Sanctity and Devotion; such was that of the *Encratites*, which seem'd to be founded in the veneration of two great Vertues, *Continence* and *Temperance*, though by extending them beyond the due limits, they lost that *Sobriety* they too strictly embraced, and became *inordinate* in their Continence, and *excessive* in their Abstinence: Such again were the *Euchitæ* or *Messalians*, who made the whole business not only of *Religion* but even of *life* to consist *in praying*; and though by it they evacuated all other ends of both, yet having the *letter* of a Precept, and the *pretence* of Devotion on their side, 'twas a *proper bait* for those who had *much* Zeal and *little* Knowledge. In like manner the *Novatians* Heresie had so glorious an inscription of Purity, as was very apt to attract well-meaning Souls; who seeing it bid such expres *defiance to Apostasie*, could not suspect that it was it self any *defection from the faith*; and accordingly some of that Sect approved their constancy in times both of *Heathen* and *Arian* persecutions. Nor must we be so uncharitable to the modern times, as not to believe many have acted upon the like Principles, and meant truth and piety, even while they actually promoted the contrary. But how sincere soever the *purposes* of such seduced Persons were, yet 'tis evident the Church has suffered no less by *them*, than by the *more crafty designers*: Their *misguided piety* has made as great and incurable Ruptures, as the most *flagitious blasphemies* of others. And when a *rent* is once made, it matters little, whether it were done by *error* or *malice*; nay, perhaps as to the hopes of repairing, the former may be the more desperate: For whereas *he* that knowingly *commits* an Ill, has the *Upbraidings* of his own Conscience towards his reducing; these on the other side have its *Cherishings* and *Encouragements*, to confirm and animate them. And doubtless they are great advantages which *Satan* has in all ages made of such Persons, whom he seems to have deluded in the same manner, that *Medea* is said to have done the daughters of *Peleas*, whom she perswaded to hack their *aged Father* in pieces, in hope that by her *Magick*, he should not only recover *life* but *youth*: So these rend and tear their *Mother* the Church, out of a hope no less delusive, of restoring her *pristine beauty* and *vigour*; how far the event parallels it also, the dying state of *Christianity* does too sadly testifie.

Zeal in contending about the smaller matters in Religion, hath broken and disturb'd the Communion of the Church.

3. Nor has it only been the Heat of *Erring persons* that has been thus mischievous, but sometimes *men of right judgments* have too much contributed to the breach of Unity, and the intemperate and imprudent *Zeal* of these hath serv'd to exasperate the mistaking *earnestness* of the other: This happens sometimes for want of distinguishing between the *Essentials* and *Circumstantials* of Religion, and so looking upon a mistake in the *latter* with the detestation proper only to the perverting of the *former*; by this means those who have entirely embraced the same *faith*, have yet violated *charity* and broken *communion*: Such slight *minute differences* when manag'd by eager Spirits being easily blown up into solemn and *lasting contentions*; so that the Disputes rais'd about some *pin* or *nail* of the Temple, have sometimes shaken and endanger'd the *whole Fabrick*, robbed the Church of that fraternal unity which was its fastest cement, and surest support. Of this we need no more apt instance from Antiquity than that which has been already mentioned upon another occasion, I mean *Victor*'s unbrother-like

Heat

Heat towards the Eastern Churches in the *controversie* about *Easter*, which had fomented that Difference into a Schism, which the meeker Piety of his Predecessors thought no ground of *unkindness*, much less of *Separation*, as *Irenæus* more at large tells him; And probably had men in all the succeeding Ages deliberately *pois'd* the Errors they oppos'd, and proportion'd their Displeasure but to the *just weight* of them, many of our *disputes* would have been so calm'd, that they should never have become *quarrels*. But many in this particular have only us'd the *Touch-stone*, not the *Scales*: And of Opinions that are erroneous, consider not which are more or less pernicious, but with an equal violence fly at all, as if the *Stoical* opinion concerning *Sins* had prevail'd in *Errors* also, and that all were resolv'd to be of the same size.

Several Errors and Heresies have been propagated by a too hot and eager contention about them.

4. But even in those of the highest kind it may perhaps be doubted, whether *too eager an opposition* have not sometimes done *hurt*, especially in those Doctrines which relate to the *mysterious parts* of Religion, wherein a *novelty* is at first lookt upon with some horrour, and many are willing rather to *condemn* in gross than nicely to *examine*: Who yet when they find this done for them by *Orthodox persons*, they think they may with such a guide venture to wade into the question, where many times the *insinuations* of Error are so subtile, that all their *Antidotes* secure them not from *infection*, but they are themselves *captivated* where they expected only to *triumph*. Neither want there those of the *Vulgar* that are of a more *insolent temper*; and out of a vanity of making themselves *Umpires* between learned men, greedily read the writings of both Parties, who yet are able to make no *solid judgment* of either; and when 'tis remembred how many *popular artifices* there are to byasse such persons, we must confess that *Truth* hath many to one *Odds* against her: Besides, *publick arguing* oft serves not only to exasperate the *minds*, but to whet the *Wits* of *Hereticks*, and by shewing them the *weak parts* of their Doctrines, prompts them to rally all their *Sophistry* to fortifie them, that what they want of *truth* and *reason*, may be supplied with *fallacy* and little colours; and Experience shews how fitly that kind of *Logick* is accommodated to the greatest part of the World. In short, it seems not improbable, that many Heresies owe much of their *growth* to the improper means of *eradicating* them: And have acquir'd a *reputation* from the *stir* that was made about them. Thus *Socrates* tells us, that *Alexanders* letters about the *Arian* Heresie serv'd to scatter that pestilent infection the more abroad, and combin'd men into parties, so that the whole *world* became the *Scene* of that long Tragedy, which possibly might have had a shorter and better *issue*, had not the notice of the Controversie been so early dispersed.

Religion not to be propagated by Arms, though the Zeal of the late times did so;

5. But if the Attempts of the *Pen* have often proved so unfit, it may be consider'd whether those of the *sword* are not more so, and *fighting* be not a worse expedient than *disputing*: And certainly we have great reason to conclude in the affirmative, if we weigh either the Injustice, or Unreasonableness of it. I know there want not those who have thought the propagating Religion by Arms not only *lawful* but *meritorious*, and that in order to the *planting* it in a Nation, the *soil* may be mellowed with the *bloud* of the Inhabitants; nay, the *old* extirpated, and *new* Colonies planted. But we are to remember that as God is the *universal Monarch* of the World, so We have all the relation of *fellow-subjects* to him, and can pretend no farther jurisdiction over each other, than what he has delegated to us: And sure 'twould be hard to produce any commission from him for the invading a Nation only because 'tis not of our Faith. 'Tis sure, *those*

thoſe to whom he firſt entruſted the promulgating of the Goſpel had far *different inſtructions*, and 'twere fit our *new Evangeliſts* ſhould ſhew their *later authority* for this ſanguinary Method; in order to which though ſome have made uſe of the *Opinion* of ſome Schoolmen, that *dominion is founded in Grace*, yet as that is but an Opinion, ſo were it admitted as the moſt certain Truth, it could never warrant any enterprize of this kind, for ſuppoſing that a people by wanting *ſpiritual* Bleſſings did loſe all their right to *temporal*, yet that Forfeiture muſt devolve only to the Supreme Lord, and when as God in another caſe asks, where is the *bill of divorce? Eſay* 50. 1. ſo we may demand of theſe zealous Invaders, where is the *bill of aſſignment*, by which that right was transferr'd to them? In ſhort, *peace* is the moſt valuable bleſſing of humane life, and we cannot without injuſtice deprive men of it, though we could as we pretend, give them *truth* in lieu of it; for maugre the *Proverb*, that *Exchange will ſtill be robbery*, where the parties are compell'd to make it. But alas, 'tis a vain imagination to think that Religion can be thus impos'd: Or that we can bind the *underſtandings* and *wills* of men, with the ſame fetters we do their *bodies*; 'tis true indeed the Apoſtle tells us *there is a way of bringing every thought into Captivity to the obedience of Chriſt*, but he tells us withal that the *weapons*, by which that Victory is atchieved, *are not carnal*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. Indeed did Religion conſiſt only in ſome external *conformities*, external *force* might bear ſome proportion to it (which perhaps is the cauſe that the one is moſt us'd by thoſe whoſe religion is moſt eminent for the other) but 'tis ſeated in thoſe *faculties* to which *outward violence* can have no acceſs. Alas, 'tis not whole Armies can beſiege my *reaſon*, nor Cannons batter my *will*, 'tis *conviction* not *force*, that muſt induce Aſſent; and ſure the *Logick* of a conquering Sword has no great propriety that way; *Silence* indeed it may, but *convince* it cannot: Its efficacy rather lies on the other ſide, breeds averſion and abhorrence of that Religion, whoſe firſt addreſs is in bloud and rapine: Nor do ſuch *attempts* gain any thing to the Cauſe but the *infamy* of thoſe rigours which are us'd to promote it. And ſure ſince this piece of *Mahumetan* Zeal has been tranſplanted into *Chriſtendom*, it has been much more miſchievous than in its native ſoil. Chriſtianity having been infinitely more oppreſſed by thoſe that thus fought *for* it, than thoſe that were in Arms *againſt* it. Whether upon this ſcore the *Pope* have not done her more harm than the *Turk*, I leave to conſideration.

6. But what is here ſaid of the *military* Sword, I intend not ſhould be applied to the *Civil*; for I treat not here of thoſe legal puniſhments, which *Magiſtrates* inflict upon their diſobedient Subjects; who indeed may *juſtly*, nay indeed muſt *neceſſarily* require Conformity to *Eccleſiaſtical* laws, as well as the *Civil:* The Eruptions in the *one* commonly over-flowing the *other* alſo, and *Schiſm* uſually ending in *Rebellion*; ſo that 'tis apparently their intereſt to guard themſelves from thoſe riotous effects of pretended zeal; nor is it leſs their duty, they being as the Ancients expreſs it, *Cuſtodes utriuſque tabulæ*; in S. *Paul*'s language, *the miniſters of God*, *Rom.* 13. and in *Conſtantines* dialect, Ἐπίσκοποι πρὸς τὰ ἔξω, *Biſhops in the whole outward adminiſtration of the Church*, and, if Hereſie or Schiſm be a *ſin*, are by their places obliged to approve themſelves *avengers*; to execute wrath no leſs there, than in other circumſtances: And that they are ſins and of no ſmall bulk, none can doubt that obſerves *Hereſie* ranked, *Gal.* 5. with *Idolatry*, *Witchcraft*, *Hatred*, *Murders*, and other ſins of the fleſh; or *Schiſm* markt out by the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, as a kind of *petrifying*

yet Magiſtrates may uſe the ſword to defend Religion, and puniſh the violation thereof when once legally eſtabliſht.

crime, which induces that induration, to which the fearful expectation of wrath is consequent, for so we find, *Heb.* 10. 26. that *forsaking the assemblies* is lookt on as previous to *Apostasie* and final defection: And therefore sure the Magistrate can do nothing kinder, even to the Offenders, than by taking their sin early, prevent that fatal growth of it. But that his just power thus rescued, I may assume my former assertion, and conclude, that all other Violences are so far from *advancing* Christianity, that they extremely *weaken* and *disadvantage* it.

Popular heats and tumults are but an ill way of reforming Errors.

7. But of no sort is this more eminently true than of those *popular heats*, where the People undertakes to chastise *error*: For besides that the outrages then committed are very apt to avert men even from truths which they see so barbarously defended, it often happens that the *multitude* take *causeless alarms*, and think their Faith is invaded when it is not. A memorable instance of this kind *Euagrius* gives in his Ecclesiastical History, where he tells us, that the Emperor *Anastasius* having added to the *Trisagium* this Clause, *Who was crucified for our Salvation*, the whole City of *Constantinople* was in an uproar, upon an ignorant jealousie that those words had some Heretical meaning; in which fury they happening to light upon a poor silly *Monk*, they immediately kill him as the *Inventor* of that clause, and a *conspirer* against the Trinity: So unhappily absurd are the Transports of *wild zeal*, which where it rules, does besides the *direct mischiefs* of Tumult and Sedition create *others* at the rebound, which are more permanent, and discompose and embitter mens spirits, and render them so ambitiously *greedy* of *quarrels* for their Religion, that they are not only prepar'd to *receive*, but to *seek* Encounters: And 'tis too sure they can never be wanting to persons of such tempers, since the *adversaries* of Truth cannot have more *advantage* or Encouragement against it, than this *unpeaceable humour* of those that profess it.

A too eager and violent zeal is injurious to Religion, and opposite to the meekness of the Gospel.

8. By these several ways has it come to pass, that even that *zeal* which should be the *life* of Christianity, is become its disease; and *Religion* like a *Hectick body* is consum'd by its own *heats*, if at least I may call those its own, which derive not from its proper and native constitution; but are the accidents of its declining state: For how confidently soever men pronounce of themselves, and believe that they are then most *pious*, when they are most *eager* and *unquiet*; yet 'tis sure this is far removed from the true *genius* and temper of *religion*, which like the *God* it worships, makes its approaches, not in *winds* and *Earthquakes*, but in the *still small voice*, 1 *Kings* 19. 12. And when 'tis consider'd, that the greatest part of the Evangelical Law is made up of *precepts* of Meekness, Long-suffering, and Condescension; we must conclude that *zeal* very *preposterous*, that pretends to obey by *violating* them; or to establish Religion by *undermining* the most essential parts of it: And to persons under that mistake, we may most properly apply the *reproof* given by Christ to his Disciples upon the same occasion, *You know not what manner of Spirit you are of.*

Our fierce and unnatural heats are oft mistaken for true Christian Zeal.

9. It will therefore become men to look with *Jealousie* on themselves in this particular; not too confidently to *pursue* every Incitation which carries a shew of Piety; but soberly to *weigh* how it agrees with the rules and Oeconomy of that Gospel for which it pretends so much concern; for though the *true Christian Zeal* can never be too much cherished; yet alas, 'tis not *every warmth* we feel about Religion that can own *that Title*; and sure we do not more often, or more fatally mistake any thing than in applying that venerable *name* to things of a far *inferior*, nay

nay ſometimes of a *contrary* nature. How often upon this Error, have men aſcrib'd that to their *piety* which they owed to their *complexions*, and thought 'twas their *religion* made them Earneſt, when 'twas merely their *conſtitution*: Nay, how often has *Satan* taken this advantage of transforming himſelf into an *Angel of light*, and inſinuating his illuſions under this diſguiſe. And truly they muſt ſtill be liable to both theſe deceits, ſo long as they place the *eſſence* of Chriſtian zeal in *heat* and *eagerneſs*. 'Tis true indeed it has its heats, but actuated in a far different way; it has flames of *Love*, not of *Anger*; to melt, not conſume our Enemies; and makes us apter to pour out our *own bloud* a Sacrifice to Truth than *that of gainſayers*. In ſhort, if it be a Fire, 'tis that *pure Elemental* which the *Peripateticks* talk of, which is but of a moderate heat; apt to *cheriſh*, not *devour*.

We may exerciſe moderation without lukewarmneſs.

10. And would God men would ſo far believe this, as to think there may be *moderation*, without the danger of *Laodicean lukewarmneſs*, and upon that ſuppoſition ſuffer themſelves to cool into a treatable Temper, and then I ſhould humbly offer to them theſe few Conſiderations.

The fallibility of humane nature ought to be an argument to charity and moderation towards thoſe that differ from us.

11. Firſt, the great and univerſal *fallibility* of humane Nature, which renders it not only poſſible that we *may*, but certain that every one of us *ſhall* erre in ſomething or other; and this ſure is very proper to perſwade lenity to thoſe whom we find actually erring. 'Tis the *Apoſtles* argument in the caſe of Sin, *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* Where the common Peccability of mankind is urged to induce Commiſeration and Gentleneſs towards the Offenders; and if this be of force *in ſin*, where the concurrence of the will renders the perſon more inexcuſable, it will ſurely hold much more in *bare Error*, which being purely involuntary, (for nothing is properly Error farther than it is ſo) 'tis to be lookt on rather as the *diſeaſe* than *crime* of the Perſon: And ſince we uſe not to exclaim againſt men for being *ſick*, but compaſſionately to endeavour their *recovery*, why ſhould we here uſe ſo much a *contrary method?* 'Tis true indeed, 'Tis neceſſary ſometimes in order to the *Cure*, and ſometimes for preventing the *infection* of others, to do ſome things *uneaſie* to the Patient; and what tends regularly to either of theſe Ends, may in this caſe alſo be Charitably done, by thoſe that have Authority: But *that* differs as far from our uſual *ſeverities*, as the *lancings* of a Phyſician do from the *wounds* of an Adverſary; or *publick* Diſcipline from *private* Spleen. So that notwithſtanding this, we may reſume our *concluſion* and infer from the *Errableneſs* of our Nature, the *reaſonableneſs of compaſſion* to the ſeduced. And as it thus prompts us to look *gently* upon others, ſo alſo to reflect *impartially* upon our ſelves; and conſider how poſſible it is, that even whilſt we condemn others, we may indeed be in the wrong, and then all the Invectives we make at their *ſuppoſed* Errors, fall back with a rebounded force upon our own *real* ones. If this poſſibility were but adverted to, it would make us leſs poſitive and Dogmatical in our opinions, and ſo conſequently take away one main ground of contention: For though we often quarrel about *matters*, which are indeed but *conjectural*, yet not till we eſteem them *otherwiſe*; and when we conſider how many men have vehemently believed *apparent falſhoods*, it may well allay our *confidences* in all thoſe caſes, where we have not ſome *firmer ground* than our *own* (or indeed any humane) *judgment* to build on it.

Prudence ſhould direct us to the fitteſt means for the reducing thoſe that be in an error.

12. As for thoſe who have the *ſureſt grounds* of Perſwaſion, and by their ſecurity of being themſelves in the Truth, have the more *reaſon* to be earneſt in propagating it to others: Let them in the ſecond place conſider how

how necessary 'tis to chuse *appropriate means* to that good end, without which they do but undermine *themselves*, and defeat their own *aims*. Indeed Prudence is not only a *Moral*, but *Christian* Virtue; and such as is necessary to the constituting of all others: Without it Devotion degenerates into Superstition, Liberality into Profuseness, and this of Zeal becomes only a Pious kind of Frensie. And of Persons so possest God may say as *Achish* did of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 21. 15. *have I need of mad-men?* No sure, the *defence of Truth* is too *noble a cause* to be so managed; its *Champions* are not like men in a fray, to make every thing a weapon that they can first snatch up, and lay on as chance or fury guides, but are deliberately to consult the properest expedients, use not only *force* but *Stratagem* against the Enemy, and yet withal to take care that while they *oppose* one, another gain not *advantage*: For alas, 'tis indifferent to our grand *Adversary*, by which of his temptations we fall, and if by subverting the *faith* of some, he shipwrack the *charity* of others, he has his *end*, and triumphs at once both over the *speculative* and *practick* part of our Religion.

Blind and rash zeal many times betrays us into great errors and miscarriages.

13. And this may induce a farther consideration, and prompt us to examine what degree of guilt lies on those who either out of a blind, or rash zeal have given him this advantage. And here though I cannot doubt, but God makes *great allowances* to the miscarriages of *sincere intentions*, yet perhaps we have carv'd more liberally to our selves than he designs us, and presume our Security greater than in truth it is. For how innocent soever a good purpose may make our *Error*, yet 'tis a priviledge beyond all possibility of grant, that our *sins* should be so also; therefore if our Misperswasions beget wicked practice, we may be accountable for the *one*, though not for the *other*. We find indeed S. *Paul* alledges his *ignorance*, as the Cause of his finding *mercy*, for his persecuting the Church, but we are to remember what that *mercy* he there refers to is; not that of *absolution*, but *conversion*: And had he resisted the *latter*, though with never so full a perswasion of his doing well in it, I much doubt whether his good meaning would have secur'd him the *former*; So that all the *encouragement* that Example can afford is, that God may probably do more for the reducing an *erring* than a *malicious* Persecutor: And when 'tis considered that all the odds that Christ makes between him that does ill *knowingly* and *ignorantly*, is in the *number* of stripes: We must resolve our *mistakes* are no such *Amulets* as totally to secure us. And then whether our *guilts* shall not swell in proportion to the *ills* we do, is a question that sure can never be resolved in the negative: For if a *good intention* cannot alter the *nature* of Sin, sure it can as little change their *degree*, or make that of two Persons equally mistaken, the *Murder* of the one, shall not be a greater Crime than an *intemperate speech* of the other. And upon this measure the accounts of erring zeal are like to rise very high with many; unless we can think Rebellion and Bloud-shed, Sacriledge and Schism, with all that train of zealous Enormities to be light and trivial.

Our zeal for Religion will never excuse the evil we commit in defence thereof.

14. Nor will it at all legitimate *these*, or any *other* Crimes, though they should happen to be committed in the *defence of Truth*: Of this S. *Peter* is a ready instance, who when to *guard* Him, who was Truth it self, he had *violated* the Authority of the Magistrate in *wounding* an Officer; Christ reprehends his rashness, and instead of applauding his *zeal*, upbraids his *absurdity*, that could think his *mean aids* considerable to him, who could command *Legions of Angels* to his rescue. And sure he is not so much more impotent in his *glory*, than he was in his *exinanition*, as now to need our *Sins* to secure any of his *concerns*; and if S. *Peter* were thus check'd for

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using that Sword which he was a little before warn'd to *buy*, it must sure set an ill Character upon those *tumultuous reformations*, which have so much employed the *zeal* of later ages, to which there can never want a concurrence of several great *sins*, the *guilt* whereof will scarce be wiped off, by their design'd *subserviency* to Truth; what Degree of *extenuation* it may afford, is hard to pronounce, since we have no *rule* to measure it by. But whatsoever it is, we are to remember, that it can belong only to such a Zeal as is *purely religious*, that mixes not with our *Passions* or *Interests*; and therefore before men be too forward to *appropriate* any Indulgence of that kind, 'twill be necessary to *Examine*, whether no sinister Adherent have vitiated that *integrity* of their purpose, to which alone it can (even by their own award and sentence) appertain.

15. I have insisted the more on *this*, because many are apt to ascribe too unlimitedly to the Force of a *good meaning*, to think that is able to bear the stress of whatsoever Commissions they shall lay on it; and by thus presuming on their *Antidote*, venture boldly on the *deadliest poisons*. To such the foregoing considerations may be useful; and by robbing them of that *imaginary* Security, help them to a *real* one, by making their good *purposes* the Director of good *actions*, not the Apology for bad. This would make Religion look consonant to it self, which now groans under the reproach of all those Ills, that are acted under its Patronage; and sure to rescue her from such a *scandal*, is but a very moderate piece of *compassion*: Yet would God she might obtain it even from *those* who profess themselves her greatest *Votaries*: But alas, 'tis one sad circumstance of her ruine, that she ows it to such; that those Weapons which should *defend* her, thus *recoil* into her Bowels, and *zeal* should do her more mischief than *profaneness*; for while she is but scoffed at by *that*, she is wounded by *this*: Nor are those *wounds* ever like to close, till our Zeal grow more *balsamick*, partake of those *healing qualities* of Love and Meekness, the Want whereof has rendred it so unhappily instrumental to our Distractions.

A good meaning will never justifie a bad action.

CHAP. XVIII.

A Survey of the Causes of Disputes; Sixthly, Idleness.

1. BUT as *this over-active* humour has done abundant Mischief to the Church, so it is observable, that the *direct contrary* has done as much; nay, which is yet stranger, the one is frequently the product of the other, and our too *busie zeal* springs from our too *great Idleness*. How much soever this may sound like *Paradox*, yet both *reason* and *experience* attest the Truth of it; for we are to consider that God has put an *active principle* into man, which 'tis impossible so to suppress, as that there shall be a total cessation from *motion*: And therefore every intermitting of sober, regular actings, makes way for wild Extravagant ones; for as nature is said so vehemently to abhor vacuity, that the very inanimate bodies would forsake their specifick motions to prevent it: So when the *mind* is Empty, when it has no worthy and profitable *speculation* to entertain it, every the most improper and preternatural *Object* offers it self, and importunately crouds in to fill the *vacuum*. This seems to have been well understood, though ill applied by *Pharaoh*, when he thought the *Israelites* proposal of Travelling into the Wilderness to their Devotions, was the Effect of their too great leisure at home; and therefore encreases their *tasks* as the pro-

Idleness a cause of our Disputes.

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pereſt way of diverting their *deſign*: And in like manner we find thoſe that treat of *Politicks*, inſiſt upon the neceſſity of keeping the *People buſie*, in order to which it is, that they mention the uſe of *Mathematicks* and other contemplative Sciences, to entertain the *active ſpirits* of a Nation, in demonſtrating of *Problemes*, ſolving *Phænomena*'s, and drawing *Schemes* and *Diagrams*, who elſe would be practiſing upon the *Government*, making new *Idea*'s and Platforms for the *Common-wealth*: And doubtleſs there is parity of reaſon in the Eccleſiaſtick State, which would have been at *more peace*, had ſome men found themſelves *other diverſions*.

The Church was at greateſt peace and union within her ſelf, when under trouble and perſecution from abroad.

2. And this is confirm'd to us by experiment and obſervation of Event; for if we look into the Primitive times, we ſhall find that when there was a neceſſity of defending the *common faith* againſt *Heatheniſm*, when Chriſtians were employed in writing *apologies* and *vindications*, there were much fewer of theſe *inteſtine debates* (at leaſt ſuch as were *Metaphyſical* and purely Notional) they had their hands full of the *foreign Enemy*, and had the leſs temptation to jangle among *themſelves*. So alſo when they were under the greateſt ſtorms of perſecution, when the Church was moſt violently aſſaulted from *without*, it had the greateſt Calm *within*. They were then inceſſantly employed, and buſied their Thoughts in preparing for the fiery trial. Thoſe cloudy days made them keep cloſe at home waiting for the Bridegrooms coming, and ſuffer'd them not to wander abroad for thoſe unprofitable Curioſities, which though like *Oil* they might nouriſh *flame*, yet would never furniſh their *Lamps*, or gain them admiſſion to the wedding; but in the intervals, and eſpecially after the total ceſſation of their calamity, when their Peace had taken them off their *Vigilance*, then while they ſlept, the Envious man had advantage to ſow his *Tares*. Reſt made them *idle*, Idleneſs made them *curious*, and Curioſity *contentious*; and thoſe who under the Tyranny of a *Nero* or *Domitian* were in perfect harmony, under the gentle pious regiment of a *Conſtantine*, grew to the greateſt diſcord; and perhaps (beſides the Divine and extraordinary ſupports the Church had in her greateſt *conflicts*) this may be one of the beſt natural *accounts*, how ſhe came to flouriſh moſt under her heavieſt *preſſures*.

Our diviſions ariſe chiefly from the neglect of moral and practical duties.

3. But our obſervation ends not here, for beſides this extraordinary importunity of thoughts, which perſecuting times occaſion'd, Chriſtianity is in its frame and conſtitution an *active State*, has its ſtanding buſineſs, and beſides all *accidental*, a Series of *determinate*, *conſtant employments*, ſufficient to entertain mens minds: From which we may infer, that when this is throughly adverted to, there will be few *chaſms* of Time to be filled with *foreign impertinencies*. And this gives a clear account how our *diviſions* have come to grow upon us, namely, by the Neglect of *practick duties*, for as every age degenerated more from *Primitive piety*, ſo they advanced farther in *nice enquiries* and *new opinions*; and as the zeal of *practice* grew cool, ſo that of *diſpute* gathered heat and vigour. So that if we conſider how far our *good works* fall ſhort of the firſt Chriſtians, we need not wonder to ſee our *controverſies* ſo far exceed them; that Time which was gain'd from the *one*, being employed in hammering and forging the *other*. I do not forget that I have before ranked this *diverſion* of Chriſtian Practice among the *effects* of our Contentions, and foreſee it may be thought very inartificial here, to make it the *cauſe* alſo: But alas, its concern in them is ſo extravagantly great, as to have at once the relation of Child and Parent, to be both Root and Branch, Fountain and Stream, and like a *circle* unites in *it ſelf* Beginning and End: For as it firſt gave *birth* to our quarrels, ſo it finally receives *encreaſe* from them. In ſhort, our oſcitant *lazie piety* gave vacancy

vacancy for them, and they will now lend none back again for more *active duty*. And as this *neglect* of our general calling of Chriſtianity has been thus pernicious, ſo have the *ill effects* thereof been improved by the like ill attendance on our particular ones. We find S. *Paul* takes notice, that the *younger widows*, who deſerted their own *Eccleſiaſtical* Office, grew *buſie-bodies* in the Secular affairs of others; and ſure we may with truth invert the note, and obſerve that *thoſe*, who either deſert or neglect their *Secular* Callings, are the moſt perniciouſly *medling* in Eccleſiaſtick matters. Did men conſcientiouſly employ themſelves in their *honeſt occupations*, their Minds would be ſufficiently *diverted*, and it would not become the work of Artificers to make new Schemes of Doctrines or diſcipline; Divinity would not then paſs the *Yard* and *Loom*, the *Forge* and *Anvil*, nor Preaching be taken in as an eaſier ſupplementary *Trade*, by thoſe that diſliked the *pains* of their own. But all this alas, we have ſeen to the equal ſhame and detriment of Piety. *Mechanicks* of all ſorts have preſum'd to *teach* what themſelves never *learnt*; and thoſe that ſerv'd long *Apprentiſhips* to other Crafts, have become *Divines* in a moment, and with the ſame emulous induſtry wherewith they us'd to invent new *faſhions*, have made new *Religions*. And as Idleneſs has thus made ſome *Preachers*, ſo it has made more *hearers*, thoſe who either by the *eaſineſs* of their Callings, or their ſlight managery of them, have had the moſt *vacant time*, have been the apteſt to run after *new Teachers*: Hence it is that Towns and Cities have been the great *nurſeries of Faction*, the *leiſure* of Shop-men making them more *inquiſitive* after, and *receptive* of Novelties. And were that *over-grown zeal* of Sermons, which has now devour'd all other parts of Religion, among that ſort of men throughly ſcanned, we ſhould find Idleneſs goes very far in its *compoſition*; for beſides that Hearing is the moſt *lazie* of all religious Offices, as appears by the *undiſturb'd ſleeps* men can take at Sermons; it is manifeſt this inſatiate appetite of it, is originally founded either in the not *having* buſineſs, or not *attending* to it. For ſhould I ask ſuch men, whether if neceſſity had enforc'd S. *Paul*'s rule upon them, that without their *labour* they ſhould not *eat*, they would have ſpent their whole week at *Lectures*, and truſted to be fed by the *Ear*. I believe few could pretend to have begun with ſo exorbitant a zeal, though the truth is in the iſſue it ſometimes arrives to it; and men that have *itching ears* forget the reſt of the *body*, whilſt to gratifie them, they totally neglect all care of their *Secular concerns*, and bring Themſelves and Families to want and beggary.

Tradeſmen by the eaſineſs of their Callings, or their ſlight managery of them, have been the apteſt to run after New Teachers.

4. Nor is it only this *one rank* of Perſons whom Idleneſs has betrayed to faction, *Servants* we have frequently ſeen under the ſame Seducement, while either having but *little work*, or but *little diligence* in it, they have found time to liſten after *novel doctrines*, with which being once tainted, they impatiently thirſt after more, and neglecting the *duties* of their place, ſpend their *time*, which by compact is their Maſters (and can with no more juſtice be purloin'd from him than his goods) in following *factious Teachers*, who inſtruct them ſo in their Chriſtian *liberty*, that they bring them to defie all *ſubjection*: And by telling them they are to call no man Maſter upon *Earth*, that they are to own no King nor Prieſt but *Chriſt*; teach them to contemn all Authority, *Domeſtick*, *Civil*, or *Eccleſiaſtick*.

Servants have neglected their duty to their Maſters, by running after factious Teachers.

5. If we look farther into *families*, we ſhall find alſo that many of our She-zealots become ſo upon the very ſame ground, when *Women* neglect that which S. *Paul* aſſigns them as their proper Buſineſs, *the guiding of the houſe*, their Zeal is at once the *product* and *excuſe* of their Idleneſs; and in ſpight of the *ill Character* the Wiſe man has ſet on her, *whoſe feet abide not in*

Women for this cauſe have neglected their Family and Houſhold affairs.

in her houſe, Prov. 7. 11. it becomes the *mark* of a Saint, when a Lecture or Conventicle is taken in the way: And though theſe feminine Irregularities may ſeem to be of no great concern to the publick, yet experience convinces the contrary; it having been the *unhappy priviledge* of that Sex (as ancient as their Mother *Eve*) to be able to do great and important *miſchiefs*; and doubtleſs many *men* may give the ſame account of their Schiſm and Sedition, that *Adam* did of his firſt ſin, *The woman that thou gaveſt me*, &c. This has always been well underſtood by *Seducers*, who have found it the moſt compendious way to their deſigns, *to lead captive ſilly women*, and make them the *Duck-coys* to their whole Family: But even thoſe who have miſt of this influence over the *minds* of their Husbands, have yet had it over their *Purſes*, and out of them ſupported the *Rabbies* of the Faction; who in gratitude to thoſe wiſe *Abigails* give their Husbands the *title*, and perhaps wiſh them the fate of *Nabal*. And God knows, how many men have thus been made contributers to the *cauſe* they have moſt deteſted, maintain'd that *fire* which thoſe *incendiaries* have kindled in the Holy place; *Money* being no leſs the *ſinews* of Eccleſiaſtical than Secular *War*.

The great neglect of catechizing hath eminently contributed to our Diviſions.

6. Thus we ſee how the *Idleneſs* even of the moſt inconſiderable perſons has at the rebound been extremely *pernicious* to the Church, which like a *Clock* or *Watch* may be diſorder'd by the *ruſt* of the leaſt *Pin*; how much more then, by that of the *main wheels* and *ſprings*? If Negligence in *lay-callings* have though but an oblique, yet ſo inauſpicious an Influence, the like Neglect in *Eccleſiaſtick* muſt needs have a worſe, becauſe more immediate and direct. And would to God we could ſay this had been wanting to the compleating the miſchief: But alas, many of thoſe who are called to labour in the *Lords Vineyard*, ſeem to have forgot their Errand, and ſtand there all the day *Idle* (a much worſe ſight than to have ſeen them ſo only in the *Market-place*;) ſo that I fear there is too evident ground of ſaying, that the *ſlight execution* of the Paſtoral Office, has been *one* of the moſt eminent Contributers to our diſtractions. And among *all the parts* of that Charge, none has been more generally, or more perniciouſly neglected than that of *Catechizing*; the want whereof has left People ſo unbottom'd, that like a *houſe* built on the *ſand*, every Wind of Doctrine blows down that Faith which they only profeſt, but underſtood not. This is that which has made ſo many *unſtable Souls*, as S. *Peter* obſerves, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. to be the proper prey of Deceivers. And God knows, we may from ſad experiment confirm the note. I wiſh the ſame *negligence* do not again evidence it ſelf by the ſame *effects*: But beſides this, which is part of the *Publick* Miniſtry, (and deſervedly is ſo, being uſeful to the whole Church, the aged as well as children) there are *private* Intercourſes between Paſtor and People which are of *great uſe*, would God they were of *equal practice*: We know a *careful* Shepherd does not only turn his *flock* into a *common Paſture*, and then think he has done his work, but does with a particular advertence obſerve the *thriving* of every one of them, takes notice of their ſingle *ſtrayings* and *diſeaſes*, and accordingly applies himſelf to reduce or cure them, and ſurely the like care is full as neceſſary in the *ſpiritual* Shepherd; 'tis not the *counſel* which is promiſcuouſly diſpenſed in a Sermon (and whereof 'tis odds every man takes that which is leaſt proper for him) that will do the *buſineſs*: Converts come not in now as in S. *Peter*'s days, in throngs and ſhoals, a more diſtinct and particular application is now neceſſary; men muſt be treated with apart, their particular *wants* diſcern'd, and *applications* accordingly made of *inſtructions*, *reproof* or *comfort*, and 'tis theſe

these appropriate *Medicines*, that are like to make *sound flocks*. Had Ministers generally bestowed more *pains* this way, they might probably have frustrated the *attempts* of Seducers, who could not so easily have insinuated themselves into the people, had they found them thus prepossest: But while these with all the arts of a subtile *industry* infuse their *poisons* into every one they meet, nothing but the like *diligence* in administring *Antidotes*, is like to countermine them. How much of that has been us'd I shall leave to the Consciences of concern'd persons to determine. But besides the *ill influence* the Pastors negligence has on the *People*, it has in respect of themselves an immediate propriety to the advancing our debates, the *leisure* which is thus acquir'd, being apt to betray *speculative persons*, to the study of those *curious questions*, which are the great *disturbers* of our Peace; and of those that study them, so few keep themselves in neutrality, that parties are still fomented by it: Whereas were the *practical business* of their Charge throughly attended, the *remainder of time* would not be more than the *study* of the more solid, useful parts of Divinity would exact, and consequently there would no *surplus* be left for those *dangerous impertinencies*, *which*, as the Apostle says, *serve to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14. But when our Watchmen *sleep*, 'tis no marvel if they *dream* too, and entertain themselves and others with those *Fantastick notions*, which the great day will manifest to have had nothing of *weight* and *reality*, besides the Mischiefs they wrought.

The leisure hours of our Churchmen ill imploy'd in the study and writing of

7. And indeed if we scan the *volumes* of those vain Speculations, we shall have cause to conclude that Idleness has *created* as well as *fomented* them; and they had as well wanted Authors as abettors, had men found themselves more useful business: And that not only the extemporary *Chimæra's* *of Fanaticks*, but the more elaborate *niceties of the Schools*, have been thus derived: We know *Air* possesses no *place*, where it first finds not a *vacuity*, nor could those lighter *notions* have filled mens *brains*, had they found them prepossest with what was more *solid*: But when men wanted more *substantial work* for their Understandings, they were fain to emplov them thus in making *Cob-webs*, of which they have made a worse sort of *Jewish* veil in the Sanctuary, and have now involved the *Gospel* in greater Obscurities, than the *Law* was before: Whence our *Bezaleels* and *Aholiabs* have been inspir'd for this work I shall not determine; but sure not from him whose Character S. *John* gives us (in peculiar reference to Gospel-revelation) that *he is light, and in him is no darkness at all*, 1 John 1. 5.

Idleness is oft a temptation to spend our time ill,

8. Thus we see even *Idleness* wants not its *operation*; but is productive of great and mischievous *effects*; it being the unhappy *property* of that Vice, that it *supplants* it self, and by a fatal *Antiperistasis* makes men perniciously *active*; so that we may truly say *sloth* has made more Business than *industry*. I am sure in this instance it has cut out work for many ages, though of such a kind, that we have little reason to wish that our *Lord* at his coming should find us *so doing*: Yet for ought now appears, our *activity* is so wholly bent that way, that 'tis like to be the *only*, at least the most *intense business* we shall be found at.

and hath been the original of Faction, and occasion of much mischief to the Church.

9. I might here take a very apt occasion to declaim against Idleness, as the unhappy fountain of so great mischiefs, but that is a *vice* that has been so often *arraign'd*, that I need not repeat those *charges* which all Authors, Natural, Moral and Divine have laid against it. Let but this of its being the Original of *faction* be added, and there can be nothing wanting to render it a most *dangerous crime*: Yea, and a most *monstrous* one too, that operates thus preternaturally, that *freezes* and yet *inflames* men at once,

stupefies and *enrages*: And yet alas, there is as much riddle in its *fate* as its *nature*; 'tis *hated*, and yet *embraced*; generally *decried*, and yet as generally *cherished*: And though it have no *advocates*, has many *friends*. Would God men would at last be ashamed to *be* what they are ashum'd to *own*, and by a diligent attendance on their proper business, secure themselves first from doing *nothing*, and then from doing *ill*; the one being so close an Attendant on the other, that 'tis scarce possible to sever them. And God knows the Church finds too sad proof of their connexion: *Idleness* having serv'd as *Ashes* to keep alive that *fire* which has set her in *combustion*. Thus unhappily *passive* is she in our disorders, and *accessary* to all our Guilts and Punishments: All our peccant *humours* concur to her *disease*, and like a common *mark* she receives *arrows* from all Quarters, we have seen how many *Contributers* there are to her *ruine*, every one whereof with a wanton cruelty (like *Cæsar*'s murderers) are ambitious to inflict *new wounds*, and to give her *Supernumerary deaths*; and whilst she is thus surrounded with *Assassines*, what can we expect, but that her present *languishings* should end in *death*; that Christian Religion now crumbled into so many *minute fractions*, should like *dust* be scatter'd, and irrecoverably dissipated; and thus infallibly it must be, if either *God* do not miraculously countermine us, and do more *for* us than we can do against our selves, or we recover so much sobriety, as to forbear to *Massacre* what we pretend to *Love*, and endeavour to bind up those *wounds*, at which our own Souls are like to *Expire*.

CHAP. XIX.

The Conclusion drawn from all the Premisses.

The best and speediest way for the healing our distractions, is to remove the occasions thereof.

1. WE have hitherto examin'd the *effects* and *originals* of our contentions, and now the only remaining Enquiry is concerning the *ways* of redress. And that will exact no long disquisition. For as in *diseases* 'tis said, the knowing the *cause* is one half of the *cure*; so more especially is it here, where the *remedies* are merely *privative*, and we are not to be healed by *external applications*, but only by *substracting* those Humours which feed the Malady: There will therefore need no other *prescription* than to advise the *exterminating* of all those Passions and Interests which have appear'd accessary to our quarrels, which though they are become the publick *Epidemick disease*, yet as the *infection* did, so must the *cure* arise from single persons: For as we look not a *common Pestilence* should cease without due care and manage both of the *sick* and *sound*: So neither can this *Church-plague* ever abate, but by the cure, or fortifying its *individual members*.

Every man ought in this case to examine and suspect himself guilty rather than another.

2. Let every man therefore who has any way made himself a Party to these contests, seriously interrogate his own heart; what it is that has engag'd Him in them: If any of the *sinister motives* before rehearst, let him for a while shift the *Scene*, and instead of *accusing others* as Opposites to Truth, *condemn himself* as an Enemy to Peace: Remembring that how just or important soever the *cause* be, it is not so to *him*; whilst he serves his humors and designs under its covert. The *Philosophers* in their darker notions of *Truth* could yet discern, that she was not accessible to *any* who sought her not purely for *her self*, with sincere and single Intentions, and if she entertain no *Pupils* that are not so qualified, is it fit she should have *Guardians* and *Champions*

Champions of a quite diſtant Temper? No, he that undertakes the defence of *Speculative* Verity, muſt firſt poſſeſs himſelf of that *practick* Truth the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of, *Pſal.* 51. That *in the inward parts*, ſuch a ſimplicity and integrity of Purpoſe, as may ſupplant all thoſe indirect Aims, purge out every prejudice and paſſion, which may byaſs and pervert him; and by that time he has done *this*, 'tis odds but he will find a *new face of affairs*, and diſcern that many of thoſe things he ſo fiercely contended about, were either falſe or trivial; acquir'd their *conſiderableneſs* only from thoſe *magnifying perſpectives* of his own Luſts, through which he viewed them. However till he have thus denudated himſelf of all theſe *encumbrances*, he is utterly unqualified for theſe *Agonies*; and how lawfully ſoever others may ſtrive, 'tis ſure he cannot, that does it upon ſo unlawful grounds, and therefore upon *pain* of loſing much more than a *corruptible crown* muſt *withdraw himſelf*. As for thoſe who can yet *acquit* themſelves from having fomented our Diſtractions, I ſhall not forbid them to look with great complacency upon it, but rather by conſidering how valuable a *piece of Innocency* it is, engage and encourage themſelves to *preſerve* it; and to that purpoſe, jealouſly to examine the *firſt overtures* of a Temptation. When they find any *proneneſs* to immerſe in Faction, any unwonted *heat* towards a Diſſenter, to trace it to its *fountain* and *original*; nicely to obſerve whether it iſſue not from ſome of thoſe *envenom'd ſprings* forementioned, and make as much haſt to ſtop its *current*, as they would to impede the moſt *overwhelming inundation*; for ſuch 'twill infallibly prove to thoſe who indulge to its courſe. But as a *Turf* will at firſt cloſe the *breach*, which neglected becomes the *inlet* of a mighty *Torrent*: So had this *early vigilance* been us'd, it might with eaſe have prevented thoſe Diſtempers in *private* Breaſts, from whence the *general* Confuſion has ſprung. As it is, might but theſe two things be obtain'd, would but the Guilty *purge*, and the innocent *guard* themſelves, we might yet hope to ſee an *end* of our Diſcords: Not that I ſuppoſe it poſſible to extinguiſh *all diverſity* of Opinions among men, who from their *differing faculties*, and other *guiltleſs occurrents*, may and will have their *judgments* ſeverally diſpos'd. But firſt, were *all*, who have upon the former culpable motives enter'd the liſts, *excluded*, we ſhould find They would amount to ſuch a number, that there would be *few left* to maintain the Combate. Nay, ſecondly, were it not for thoſe *conceal'd inducements*, there would ſcarce be any *Combate* to maintain, thoſe are the things that convey the *ſting* and *malignity* into our Differences, without thoſe we might diſſent, but not fall out; and ſhould no more be angry to ſee another *opine contrary to us*, than we are to ſee him of a *different ſtature*, or *complexion*. In fine, let us pretend what we will, 'tis the Carnality *within*, that raiſes all the Combuſtions *without*: This is the great *wheel* to which the Clock ows its *motion*, while the *pretext* of Truth and Piety is but like the *hand*, ſet indeed more conſpicuouſly, but directed wholly by the *ſecret movings* of the other. This, *this* alone is it which creates and continues our broils, and by a monſtrous conjunction of *Properties*, is it ſelf both *flame* and *fuel*: Nor can we doubt that from hence ſpring thoſe railing accuſations, we bring one againſt another, if we remember what S. *Jude* tells us, that the *Angel* brought them not even againſt the *Devil* himſelf, he could calmly manage a *diſpute* with the moſt execrable and provoking *adverſary*, becauſe his *Angelick nature* had none of that *carnal leaven* which ferments to the *ſouring* of ours, an evident Indication what it is that has rendred our arguings ſo invective that *divinity* ſeems now an Artifice to elude *law* by daily patronizing thoſe *Libels*, which would elſe be obnoxious to *civil Juſtice*.

Men generally cherish their vices under the covert of Religion.

3. But I presume there need no more be said to evince this, which has, I fear, the attestation of too many consciences, to be generally doubted; the *greater difficulty* will be, to perswade the depositing of those *lusts*, which though they are confestly the *Boutefeaus* among us, have yet by I know not what Fascination so *endear'd* themselves, that we tenaciously *retain* them in spight of all their appendent Mischiefs; nay, we *cherish* and *foster* them, and for that very purpose bring them under the *covert* of Religion. He that has but a *puny vice*, if he get it like *Joash* conceal'd and shelter'd in the *Sanctuary*, 'twill not only *live*, but *reign* too; Put on a Port and Majesty, and appear venerable upon the pretence of that Piety, whose Essence and Being it evacuates and undermines.

Religion is sometimes made to countenance the foulest crimes.

4. Indeed sin never arrives at so luxuriant a *growth* as when it roots in *hallowed ground*, which *Satan* so well knows, that he has ever been industrious to *plant* it in that *soil*. Thus we find he had introduced the most *brutish crimes* into the religion of the *Gentiles*, interwoven them into their Sacred *Rites* and *Mysteries*, till virtue and vice had changed names, and it became *piety* to be Wicked, and *profaneness* to be innocent. And when that gross deceit became detected by *Gospel-light*, when he could not in the same manner obtrude upon *Christians*, he yet found the way to do it more obliquely, and by starting these religious *quarrels*, gave at once employment and reputation to the most irreligious *vices*. For alas, what part of wild *fury* was there in the Heathen *Bacchanals*, which we have not seen Equall'd if not Exceeded by some *intoxicated zealots*? Or what *cruelty* in their most barbarous *rites*, which has not been matcht by the *inhumanity* of dissenting Christians? So that upon a just scanning, all our splendid *pretence* of Sanctity is but an *emulation* of Gentile Impurity under a better name; and while we damn Heathens for their *Moral virtues*, We are yet so stupid as to hope our selves to be saved by their *worst vices*.

The great end of Christianity perverted by those that contend about the purest profession of it.

5. And now who that does enough *consider* can think he can enough *bewail* this sad state of affairs? That Christianity should thus out-run it self, and bring us round to *Gentilism* again, whilst her professors ridiculously contend for the *title* of the best Christians, by *such acts* as denominate them none at all. Thus have we inverted the *significancy* of that *Sacred Name*, and made it serve only to upbraid the *contrariety* of *our practice*; so that *that* which was once the *Index* to point out all *Moral* and *Divine virtues*, does now on the contrary mark out *that part* of the World, where *least of them* reside. This, this alone is the *prize* we have acquir'd with so much *sweat* and *bloud*, this the *Triumph* we have brought to our Religion, which indeed could never have sunk to such a *despicableness* by any Endeavours but our *own*; for so long as Christianity waged *war* only with *foreign* enemies she never mist to be *victorious*, but since that these *intestine discords* have turn'd her force against *her self*, *Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos*, there is no possibility of success, the mere *fight* implies a *defeat*, and the *swords* of all Parties meet in her *bowels*. 'Twas a passionate *expostulation* that *Julia* is said to have us'd with her two sons *Antonine* and *Geta*, whose animosities having prompted them to *divide* the Empire, which they were joyntly to have *enjoyed*, she askt them whether they would divide their Mother also; implying how much their *discords* had rackt and torn her. And sure our *common Mother* may make a yet sadder *complaint* of her Sons, by whose *unkind dissentions* she is so miserably *mangled*, that she may cry out with the *Psalmist*, *My soul is among Lions, and I lye among the Children of men that are set on fire.*

6. And

6. And now if amidſt all our *importunate pretences* to Piety, there be indeed any ſuch thing among us, methinks it ſhould give us ſome *relentings*, make us ſadly conſider to what a *deplorable condition* we have brought that very *religion* on which we profeſs to hang all our *hopes*; and would God thoſe who are the moſt nearly concerned in this Contemplation would purſue it to the utmoſt; let them on the one hand ſet the moſt *glittering temptations* to Diſcord, and on the other let them view the *diſmal effects* of it, and then conſider at how *dear a rate* they gratifie a few *impotent Paſſions*. Can any man without horror think that his *thirſt* of glory has brought *diſhonour* to his Religion, and conſequently to his God; that his *curious enquiries* into things ſecret, has helpt to Evacuate the more *uſeful things* Revealed; or in ſhort, that his *purſuit* of his various *intereſts* and *appetites* has deſtroyed what was ſo incomparably more valuable, the *honour* of the Goſpel, the *unity* of the Church, and as many *ſouls* as have periſht by that ſcandal? 'Twas as infamous a Character of *inhumanity* as the very *Poets* could feign of *Diomedes*, that *he fed his horſes with mans fleſh*; but alas, that barbarity is here infinitely out-done, when men nouriſh far *worſe bruits*, their own unreaſonable *luſts*, with thoſe things that are moſt *ſacred*. Certainly were the vaſtneſs of this *guilt* throughly weighed, 'twould make men ſick of thoſe petty wretched *acqueſts* they have thus purchaſed, make them fling back this *price of bloud*, I ſay not with the ſame *deſpair*, but with as great *remorſe* and *deteſtation* as *Judas* did the *ſilver pieces* for which he ſold his Maſter. 'Tis ſure the crimes have too great an affinity, as in all other circumſtances, ſo eſpecially in this, that as the one *was*, ſo the other *is* moſt frequently the Guilt of an *Apoſtle*, I mean of thoſe to whom Chriſt has committed the diſpenſing of that Goſpel which they thus evacuate, and doubtleſs this is a conſideration of great enhanſement, as that which ſuperadds *treachery* to all the other peſtilent *ingredients* of the Crime; 'tis the *falſifying* the moſt important *truſt*, for under words of that ſignification we find the *office* of the Miniſtry every where repreſented in Scripture, as *Stewards*, *Ambaſſadors*, *Shepherds*, and conſequently the accounts of the ſin muſt ſwell ſo much the higher. For a Steward to *embezle* thoſe good he undertakes to *manage*; an Ambaſſador to *betray* his Prince for whom he ſhould *negotiate*; a Shepherd to *worry* that Flock which he is ſet to *guard*, theſe are crimes that double their malignity from the quality of the Actors; and yet this is undeniably the Guilt of all *thoſe* whoſe *profeſſion* having devoted them to the *Church*, have impiouſly chang'd the *Scene*, and devoted the Church to *them*, ſerv'd all their mean degenerous ends upon her; and as *Chirurgions* are ſaid ſometimes to deal with profitable Patients, kept open, nay, widened her *wounds* for their own *advantages*.

We ought to bewail the multitude of our Diſtractions, and the hand we have had therein,

7. It has been the *Prieſts Litany* as ancient as *Joels* time, *Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach*; but now alas, who ſhall prevail with them to do that themſelves which they beg of God, to ſpare his people and his heritage; to proſtitute them no more to their own ſiniſter deſigns, nor by their vain and endleſs *contentions*, expoſe them as well to *ruine* as *contempt*. He were indeed a happy Orator that could in this effectually intercede with them, though One would think the *wonder* ſhould lie on the other ſide, and the only ſtrange thing be, that they ſhould either *need* or *reſiſt* ſuch a ſolicitation, it being ſo much the concern of all that ought, as well upon the ſcore of *advantage* as *duty*, to be dear to them; ſo that the *Church* may moſt aptly addreſs to theſe her *Sons* in the ſame form S. *Paul* does to the *Philippians*, when he conjures them to unity, *Phil.* 2. 1. *If therefore there be any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love,*

and not proſtitute the peace and happineſs of the Church to our Paſſions and Intereſt.

love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil you my Joy that ye be like minded. And can it be possible for any who have tasted all or any of these, to think fit to wrangle them away? to exchange these divine *irradiations*, the Antepast and Emblem of Heaven, for those bitter *dissentions*, whose *Alpha* and *Omega*, their *original* and *end* are Hell, and do as lively represent as they certainly lead to the horror and confusion of that land of Darkness.

To study the peace of the Church is highly commendable and praiseworthy.

8. But if some mens appetites be so depraved, that they find more Melody in *discord*, than in the *harmony* of the Angelick Quires, yet even these can discern *Musick* in a consort of *Plaudites*, and seldom miss to be affected with those *Eulogies* which are given themselves; and therefore though they disjoyn the Apostles motives, *Phil.* 4. 8. and will do nothing for virtue, yet they may be presum'd more considerate of Praise: And God knows, in a wrong sence they are too much so; and sure, as we have already observed by it, have made no small *contributions* to our *discords*: yet did they measure *Glory* by its right and proper *standard*, they would find they have all this while courted a *shadow*, and that the *substance* will never be acquir'd by being *fomenters* of publick Mischief; but the unhappiness of it is, that our *Ecclesiastick* as our *Secular* Duellists abuse themselves with false notions of Honour, novel Opinions and subtile Questions they think attest the *pregnancy* and *acuteness* of their Understandings, and give them *reputation*; but alas, how vain an imagination is this? Who admires the *Sagacity* of the Viper, that eats her way through her *mothers bowels*? Or who reverences a man for the *sharpness* of that Sword wherewith he commits his *Parricide*? Nay, what more infamous brands have Records of all ages stuck upon any, than those who were *Ingeniosissime nequam, & facundi malo publico*, who us'd the best Parts to the worst Ends, and with the greatest *cunning* and *artifice* have contrived their *mischiefs*?

Small credit for any man to imploy his wit or parts to the prejudice of the Church.

9. But could we abstract from these *pernicious effects*, and suppose that this *exercise* of their Faculties were *innocent*, yet sure it would be too *light* and *impertinent* to become *matter of praise*. He that should spend all his Time in *tying* inextricable Knots, only to baffle the Industry of those that should attempt to *unloose* them, would sure be thought not much to have serv'd his generation. 'Tis one of the certainest *Estimates* we can make of a man, to measure him by the *employments* he chuses, if those be *slight* and *trifling*, they suggest the Person to have *low thoughts*; what an abasement of Majesty was it thought in *Nero* to become a *Fidler* and *Stage-player*? And *Herodian* tells us, that men hoped no longer for any thing princely from *Commodus* the Emperor, when he had once listed himself among the *Fencers*, and instead of the magnificent *stiles* of his Predecessors, derived from the *conquests* of great and populous Nations, assumed This, *The vanquisher of a Thousand Gladiators*: And certainly 'tis no less a descent and diminution for those who were design'd by God for the *highest atchievements*, the subduing the Kingdom of Satan, and pulling down his strong Holds, to devote themselves to these so much *ignobler contests*, and account their *conquests*, not from the number of *Souls* won to God, but of *Opposers* worsted in Argument. Indeed, as we before observ'd, they have now rendred the *Church* a kind of *Theatre*, Disputes are manag'd with such Sleight and Sophistry, that at the best, the *Litigants* do but set forth a shew of *Fencers*: 'Twere well if they did not sometimes play the *Gladiators*, by that wounding deadly sharpness they use, and 'twould be consider'd what a change is now made: In the Primitive times, none that own'd any *relation* to the Church were allowed to be *spectators* of those Games, now That is made

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the *Stage*, and her ableſt Perſons the *Actors*. But certainly 'tis very little to the reputation of thoſe who have ſo unworthily debaucht both it and themſelves; and therefore to all other *diſſwaſives* we may add this of the *Uncreditableneſs*: For let men fancy what they pleaſe of the *Glory* acquir'd in theſe opportunities of ſhewing their parts, the beſt that can be ſaid of them is, that *they uſe Wit fooliſhly*. A character whereof the one part devours the other, and leaves not ſo much as a mouthful of that *popular air* which theſe *Chamælions* gaſp after. In a word, though *vain glory* be a principle I ſhall commend to no man, yet in this caſe 'twere more tolerable if it would work the right way, put them upon what were really *praiſe-worthy*, and then ſure 'twould incline them rather to *cloſe* than *widen* the breaches of *Sion*. To inflict *wounds* on an unreſiſting Patient, is a thing that requires neither *courage* nor *skill*; Every man can do that who has but ill nature enough; but to *cure* them is an act at once of *Art* and *Mercy*, and entitles to the Praiſe of both: And therefore if any mans *eagerneſs* of Glory have made him over-ſee the *way* to it, let him now at laſt recover his *wandrings*, and ſeek it in this one only proper *Method*.

10. But this is, I confeſs, a *Topick* of Perſwaſion fitter for *Philoſophers* than *Divines*, and I wiſh I may have urg'd it impertinently; it being much leſs ſhame for *me* to have done ſo, than for *them* to need ſuch an Argument. There is another more genuine and proper, derived from the nature of *diſtributive Juſtice*, which requires a man to do his *Utmoſt* to repair the *injuries* he has done to any; this is ſo ſtated a *rule*, that all our *Caſuiſts* juſtly preſs it in all caſes of damage: But are there not many of them, who while they ſo eagerly aſſert that *obligation* in other mens caſes, do as *David* did in the matter of the poor mans Lamb, ſeverely ſentence that *injuſtice*, whereof *themſelves* are more highly Guilty? To every ſuch I would ſpeak, in the words of *Nathan*, and ſay, *Thou art the Man*. Alas, ſhall every little *triſle* I purloin from my Neighbour have *weight* enough to ſink me to the *abyſſe*? and ſhall *thefts* of the greateſt magnitude, the robbing God of his *honour*, the Church not only of her *Patrimony*, but her *Peace*, and the World of thoſe ineſtimable *benefits*, which from an uniform conſonant Chriſtianity were to have been tranſmitted to it; Shall theſe, I ſay, be ſo ſlight and inconſiderable, as not to hinder his aſcent to the hill of the Lord? Shall the leaſt *violence* I offer to the perſon of an enemy oblige me to *ſatisfaction*, and ſhall he rend and tear the *body* of his Saviour (who willingly expos'd his *natural* body only in tenderneſs to that *myſtical* one, which is thus violated) and ſhall this criminous *barbarity* exact no offers towards amends? Certainly no man can have *partiality* enough to think it, and if he do not, he is to remember *himſelf* indiſpenſibly engag'd to take the ſame *courſe* he preſcribes to *others*, and with his utmoſt *induſtry* endeavour to repair the *injury* he has done.

We ought rather to repair thoſe Breaches which we have help't to make,

11. And O that we might ſee this ſo eſſential a piece of *Juſtice* aſſum'd among us, that our impertinent *ſtrifes* might be ſuperſeded and all moulded into the one noble *Emulation*, who ſhall faſteſt unravel his own *miſchiefs*, and promote that *peace* he has hitherto diſturb'd. This indeed were worthy to be the united deſign of all learned men; and were it once ſo, who knows how proſperous it might be: For though ſome *ſingle attempts* have miſcarried, yet probably one great *cauſe* why they do ſo, was becauſe they were *ſingle*. When one Perſon comes with *pacifick arguments* to part an *enraged multitude*, let his Reaſons be never ſo convincing, they are not like to be much adverted to; the only *effect* is, that he who deſign'd himſelf the common *Friend*, is taken as the common *Enemy*; but where

and all of us to concur and joyn therein as one man.

where many associate in such a design, and make a party for peace, their *numbers* give a considerableness to their *proposal*, and prepare for their *success*. And were there such a *combination* in order to the Churches Quiet, it were more than possible they might undermine the *contrary attempts* of Faction and Discord.

The several dissenting Parties among us ought to unite in those things wherein they all agree,

12. And why should not every man be *ambitious* to make one in this so *pious a confederacy*, and resolve most studiously to endeavour the *composing* the Distractions of the Church, in which they may borrow something of *instruction* even from their past guilts, and copy out their own *industry* to this better purpose. This is sure; our *disputes* had never so multiplied, had there not been a great deal of *unhappy diligence* in nourishing the seeds of them: Every *controverted Tenet* has been heightned and improved, till it have spawn'd a *numerous brood*, so that those who at first *differ'd*, perhaps, but in some *few* things, wrangle on, till at last they *agree* in *fewer*: Now were the like Industry applied the *other way*, it might sure do much to the changing the *whole Scene*. If men would as nicely observe the Principles of *agreement* between *dissenting parties*, and with as much Art and Care seek to dilate and spread them; why might not they as much *overwhelm* our *Differences*, as they have been *overwhelmed* by them? 'Tis sure that those Universal *truths*, to which all Parties assent, are, as the *cleareſt* for their Evidence, so the most *important*, for their Consequence: And why should not *these*, if rightly managed, be a more enforcing *motive* to Unity, than the more *singular opinions* (perhaps fancies) of some men, can be to Discord? Certainly would but our *Moses*'s try what this *rod* of *God* in their hand could do, they would find it able to devour all *those* of the *Magicians*. Would they like *Benhadad*'s Ambassadors, catch hold of every amicable *expression*, any thing that looks towards *Peace*, and close in with it, they might probably see *Effects*, beyond what can at a distance be expected. For sure, *Peace* is not such a *dry Tree*, such a sapless unfertile thing, but that it might *fructifie* and *encrease* as well as *Discord*, were there a just care taken to cherish and nourish it.

And study our Differences with a mind inclin'd rather to compose than widen them.

13. Indeed this Design is only the *Amulet* which can render it safe to look into *controversies*, which are else apt to infuse a kind of *acrimony*, and *venome* into mens spirits; For we see many, whose *curiosity* at first brought them as unconcern'd *spectators*, do within a while engage with all earnestness in the *contest*: But those who study differences only with an aim of composing them, these have their thoughts determin'd and fixt, and so not left loose to the enticements of any Party. *Aristotle* says, that on the Hill *Olympus* the Air is so subtil and piercing, that those who ascend thither, are forced to carry with them *wet Spunges*, by that *moisture* somewhat to allay that extreme *tenuity* which otherwise would be deadly; and sure they that deal in *controversies*, live in no less *corrosive an Air*, and therefore had need make the like provision, and carry with them this *Pacifick purpose*, as a *Lenitive* and *Emollient* against the infectious *sharpness* they will there meet with.

The victory over our Passions is preferable to all other conquests.

14. And now how blessed a thing were it, if we could once thus follow the things that make for Peace? that the *numberless mutual enmities* which are now among us, may all be reduced into *one*, that we may fight not against *single Adversaries*, but against *War* it self, and contend against *nothing* but *contention*. And sure our victory here were worth millions of those petty conquests wherewith men please themselves, and which acquire them so little of real advantage, that the same account which was given of *Otho* and *Vitellius*, that the *war* would swallow up the one, and the *victory* the other, is too applicable to our *combatants*, who are like to be equally

ly unhappy in *defeat* or *ſucceſs*. The *Spartans* had an Order that when any of their *Generals* had compaſſed his Deſign by *policy* or *treaty*, he ſhould ſacrifice an *Oxe*, but when by *force* and *bloud-ſhed*, a *Cock* only: From the diſtant values of which oblations, *Plutarch* obſerves how much they preferr'd the Atchievements of calm and ſober *counſels*, before thoſe of *ſtrength* and *power*: But ſure the diſparity is more eminent in the preſent inſtance, where if we *fight* we *wound* our Brethren, but if we *unite* we *deſtroy* our Enemy; baffle and circumvent *Satans* Maſter-ſtratagem, and not only *worſt* but *outwit* him. Indeed this and this only is worth our Induſtry, whereas thoſe *little defeats* we give each other, are like *thoſe* in a civil War, wherein the *publick* is ſtill ſure to be a *Loſer*; upon which conſideration the *Romans* allowed not their Captains to triumph for ſuch Victories; and ſure our *Chriſtianity* is very ill beſtowed on us, if it have made us ſo much worſe natur'd, as to chuſe thoſe ruinous Conqueſts *at home*, before the moſt glorious and profitable ones *abroad*.

15. 'Twas *Abner*'s admonition to *Joab*, when he was in a hot purſuit of the *Iſraelites*, 2 Sam. 2. 26. *Shall the ſword devour for ever? knoweſt thou not that it will be bitterneſs in the latter end?* And ſure 'tis more than time for our Leaders to make the ſame reflection, and as *Joab* did there, call back the People from following their Brethren: Nay indeed, would they but attend, they might hear themſelves called back; the *great Captain* of their Salvation ſounding a *retreat* from theſe fatal skirmiſhes. *Xenophon* in the inſtitution of *Cyrus* tells us of one *Chryſanthus*, who in the heat of battel had his hand lift up to *ſtrike* an Enemy, but hearing in the very inſtant the Trumpet ſound a *retreat*, *ſtopt* his blow. A great ſobriety of *courage* ſo to ſhew more Zeal to the *obeying* his General, than the *annoying* his Enemy; and an Inſtance of much *reproach* to our *Spiritual Combatants*, who have ſhewed themſelves ſo much worſe diſciplin'd, as in ſpight of daily repeated *calls* to Peace, ſtill to *purſue* their Hoſtility: But ſure ſuch an *inſolence* is ſo inconſiſtent with the *pretence* they make of fighting Gods Battels, that they muſt either *reform* the one, or *diſclaim* the other. *Our Governours ought to perſwade their people to peace, and call them off from Contention.*

16. And now if after all that hath or can be ſaid of the *obligation*, *neceſſity* or *advantages* of Peace, we are put to the Pſalmiſts Complaint, *That there are ſtill thoſe that will make them ready to battel:* If men are of ſo untreatable a Temper, that nothing can be obtain'd of them; what remains for thoſe that are Peaceable and Faithful in *Iſrael*, but to *bewail* thoſe Miſchiefs they cannot *redreſs*? If the Church muſt periſh, at leaſt to give her Funeral-rites, and if they cannot quench her *flames*, yet to bedew her *aſhes* with their *tears*. 'Tis true, we cannot yet ſay ſhe is quite *dead*; but though ſhe *breaths* yet in a few pious peaceful Souls, yet like a *Palſied perſon*, ſhe ſcarce *moves* a Limb, ſhe wants vigour to actuate the generality of her profeſſors, and remains rather a *trunk* than a *body*: And ſure if there be truth in that Phyſical Aphoriſm, which ſays, That *diſeaſes which croſs the temper and conſtitution of the Patient are moſt dangerous*; we may well conclude her *deſperate*, there being nothing more repugnant to the very Elements and Principles of her Being, than thoſe contentions under which ſhe now *groans*. *And to bewail the miſchiefs which they cannot redreſs;*

17. Yet there is an *omnipotent Power* to whom no Difficulties are inſuperable, an *unerring Phyſician* who makes the moſt hopeleſs Diſeaſes, but the Triumph of his Art. O let us reſort to him, and invite his Aids in the ſame pathetick form, wherewith he was ſolicited for *Lazarus*, *Jo.* 11. 3. *Lord, behold ſhe whom thou loveſt is ſick:* She for whoſe ſake thou endureſt ſuch contradiction of *ſinners* againſt thy ſelf, is now by the contradiction *and implore the aid of our ſpiritual Phyſician for the curing of our Diſtempers.*

of her own *Children*, languishing and expiring, she for whom thou pouredst out *thy bloud*, lies weltring in her *own*; Lord, save or she perisheth: Were such Petitions enforced and ingeminated by the daily breathings of humble devout hearts, who knows how prevalent they might be? In this sense also *Heaven* might suffer *violence*; nor is there any better countermine to all the *outrages* acted upon Earth than by making them thus reverberate in our *cries* and *prayers*.

Few lay to heart the distractions of the Church, or intercede to God on her behalf.

18. And perhaps *this* Consideration will draw us all, even the most *peaceful* of us into the *guilt* of a negative Accessarinesse to the present Mischiefs. There are divers that dislike our *contentions*, and blame the *abettors*; but yet with such Unconcern'dness and Indifferency, as that wherewith we commonly talk of the *combustions* of foreign States, wherein we rather express our *Judgment* than our *resentments*, and do make it more our *discourse* than our *concern*. And even of those who have in some degree laid it to heart, who is there that has not been some way wanting in the ardency, or frequency of his intercessions? Let every one seriously interrogate his own Heart, and I fear 'twill witness to him, that his own *private concerns* are much apter to excite his *devotion*. Let us remember with what *passion* and *importunity* we invoke God in our particular Exigents, and consider whether *we* are equally affected with *those* of the Church: Hast thou been like *Hezekiah*, sick unto death? And hast thou with him wept sore, and vehemently solicited a recovery? Has thy *estate* been invaded by Oppression, thy *fame* by Slander and Detraction? And hast thou with loud and earnest cries, appealed to that *God to whom vengeance belongs*? Or hast thou been in that condition which is proverbial for setting men to their prayers? Hast thou like *Jonas* been in a storm, in minutely expectation of being swallowed up by the *waves*, if not the *Whale*; and in this Ecstasie of fear, when as *thy soul was*, as the Psalmist speaks, *even melted away because of the Trouble*, hast cried unto the Lord, and even out-nois'd the billows in *thy* clamorous importunities for aid? Hast thou in all, or any of these estates been thus affected for thy self? Then remember whether thy *resentments* have been proportionable for *that* which is much better than thy self: If the no less imminent and pressing *dangers* of the Church, have not as much awakened thy *fervor*, given as sharp and piercing an *accent* to thy Prayers, thou must needs confess, thou hast fall'n short of what thou shouldest and mightest have done towards her rescue.

We ought to cry mightily to God, and deprecate those judgments that are upon us;

19. And if this Inquisition be *impartially* made, who among us can plead *Not guilty*? And therefore in reflections upon our past omissions, we are *in justice* oblig'd to redouble our *Zeal*, to say over again our *Tepid heartless prayers*, and inflame them with a *Coal* from the Altar; an earnest affectionate Concern for all that is holy, such as may prompt us to cry, and that mightily to God: We see the *Ninevites* could do it when there was no visible approach of *danger*, but merely upon the *presage* of a stranger Prophet, backt with the *consciousness* of their own Guilt: I fear we more than equal them in the *latter* Motive, I am sure we far exceed them as to the *former*. The *miseries* we are to deprecate being not only under denunciation and threat, but actually upon us, though withal so improveable, that after all the *black Catalogue* our Experience brings in, our Fears meet us with the *bottomless Prophetick menace*, Esay 5.25. *For all this his Anger is not turn'd away, but his hand is stretched out still.* 'Tis the usual Oeconomy of divine Justice to make our *Crimes* our *Punishment*, and to give us up to *those Ills*, which were at first, our own *depraved choice*: And God knows we have too much reason to fear this may be our case: That we who

who have ſo perverſly violated all the *bands* of Unity, wantonly wrangled our ſelves out of all *inclinations* to Peace, ſhould never be able to reſume them; that all thoſe *gentle breathings* of Grace, by which *exaſperated Paſſions* are to be cool'd and tempered, ſhould be withdrawn, and we finally be given up to be diſſipated by thoſe Whirl-winds our ſelves have rais'd: That *Chriſtianity* which we have made the ſtale and Property to our irregular *appetites*, us'd only as *fig-leaves* to hide our *ſhame*, ſhould wither and ſhrink into nothing; and that *we* who could not agree in what manner to *retain* it, ſhould at laſt too well agree to *renounce* it.

and beſeech the Divine Goodneſs to heal our very unwillingneſs to be healed.

20. This alas, as it is the *fearfulleſt*, ſo is it the *probableſt* Iſſue of our wild Contentions, ſuch as nothing but the miraculous Effluxes of divine *Clemency* can avert. O let us with all the *groans* and *tears*, ſo deplor'd a Condition exacts, addreſs thither, importune the *father of Mercies* to pity *us*, who know not how to pity *our ſelves*, and that though we have caſt off *all bowels*, yet that we may find them all concenter'd *in him*: That he will heal our *wounds*; and which of all others is the moſt deſperate, our *unwillingneſs* to be healed: That the *Spirit of Peace* may over-ſhadow us, and impreſs on us the *Dove-like qualities* of Meekneſs and Gentleneſs: That he would reſcue our Religion from our Profanation, not by taking *it* from Us, but by conforming *us* to It: Finally that he would do for us, not only above what we can *ask* or *think*, but beyond what we would *wiſh* or *chuſe*, and not ſuffer us to *acquire* the Miſeries we ſo eagerly *purſue*.

we ſhould qualifie our ſelves for this Interceſſion by Univerſal Holineſs and Purity of Life.

21. This *divine interpoſition* alone is it that can poſſibly ſecure us, and indeed the ſuit amounts to no leſs, than that he will *force* upon us the Bleſſing we *reſiſt*, and do us good againſt our wills, which is ſo bold a *requeſt*, that they had need be more than ordinary Favourites that ſhall prefer it. Thoſe *hands* muſt be very pure, that are lift up in ſuch an *interceſſion*: And therefore all that undertake it are obliged to qualifie themſelves for it, by purging out not only the *leven* of Malice and Strife, but all other *filthineſs* of the Fleſh and Spirit: Without This, we can never approve our ſelves to intercede in earneſt; for what can be more ridiculous than to deprecate the *ruine* of Chriſtianity by the *contentions* of other men; when our ſelves contrive it by ſome other vice of our own? This is not to deſire it ſhould *live*, but that none but we ſhould *kill* it. 'Twill therefore concern thoſe who wiſh the *Peace* of the Church, to examine whether they do as much project for her *Purity*; otherwiſe 'tis a mockery to pretend ſuch a *jealous tenderneſs* for her. We have ſeen there are more ways than one, by which Chriſtian practice may be evacuated, and it matters little from whence that Wind blows that ſhipwracks our Piety. Yet 'tis not to be denied that of all thoſe *tempeſtuous blaſts*, this of our *contentions* is the rougheſt and moſt fatal. 'Tis indeed not a ſingle guſt, but an encounter and ſtrugling of ſeveral contrary winds; and God knows no *poetical deſcription* can out-do the *horror* of the ſtorms they have rais'd; yet for ought I diſcern, there is nothing that is leſs vulgarly accuſed, which I muſt account to the Reader, as the *cauſe* why I have detain'd him ſo long upon this Head; and given it a *length* ſo unproportionable to the *preceding* parts of this Diſcourſe.

CHAP. XX.

THE CLOSE.

A serious and pathetick exhortation to peace, and the use of all those means whereby it may be attain'd.

1. WE have now seen the unhappy riddle of the *Unchristianness* of Christians unfolded, have observ'd the *Originals* and *Causes* of That which is too notorious to all the world in its *Effects*. And though in this cursory view the *Reader* is not to think he has any such *compleat discovery*, as should supersede his own *farther inquisition*, yet as it may serve to *awaken*, so somewhat to *assist* his Industry, give him some light and insight into the wiles of Satan: And by branding some of the chief of those *cheats* which have robb'd us of our *Piety*, prepare for the detection of the *whole Confederacy*: In the interim this *Specimen* may serve to stop his wonder at the *ruinous estate* of Christianity, for though 'tis true that it was compacted of all the most *incorruptible materials*, had all the *harmony* of parts which the most exact *Frame* and *Composure* could give it, and so was qualified both for *strength* and *beauty*, to have defied all the *injuries* of Time; yet while she has so many *Underminers*, 'tis not strange to see her in the *dust*, there being no *one* of these, especially that I last insisted on, which has not destructive *efficacy* enough, first to *deface*, and then to *ruine* her.

2. But it is but an unprofitable acquest to know the *Authors* of our mischiefs if we stop there, this enquiry being matter not of mere *Curiosity*, but of the neerest and most pressing *Interest*: We search not after Malefactors for their *acquaintance*, but for their *punishment*, and our own *security*; and all our discoveries of this kind are vain, if we apply them not to that purpose. Let me therefore conclude with this *earnest Petition* to the Reader, That he will not to all the *native* Defects of this *discourse*, add this *accidental* one, that it shall be perfectly *impertinent*; a mere waste of his Time and my own; which it will inevitably *prove*, if it engage him not in an *earnest prosecution* of those *Delinquents* it hath impeacht; and in as earnest an endeavour to repair the *Mischiefs* they have wrought.

3. In short, let every man deposit what he has here read, not with his *memory* only, but his *conscience*, let him there seriously ponder the Excellency of that *holy vocation*, as S. *Paul* terms it, *Eph.* 4. 1. *to which he is call'd*: And then as seriously consider, *whether he have*, as the Apostle there exhorts, *walked worthy of it*; if he find he have not (as alas, who is there that has?) Let him search out as the *particulars*, so the *causes* of his Miscarriages: Diligently sift out those Fallacies of *Satan*, or his own *heart*; those sly Delusions which have made him act thus preposterously against all the Convictions of common *reason*, natural *conscience*, or Christian *experience*; and when he has discovered, let him make no delay to rescue himself from their *Treacheries*, but manfully break those *withs* and *cords* (which are too weak to hold any that will but in earnest remember, he is a *Nazarite*, a Person consecrate to God) resolutely resist the *insidious caresses* of those *Dalilah's* which will deliver not *Himself* only, but the *Ark* to the *Philistines*. Nor is he to content himself with his own *single escape*, but to propagate the *deliverance* to as many as he can; let him blazen and stigmatize those *Impostors* (for 'tis a *combining* with them to *conceal* them) warn and caution *others* against those jugling Artifices, by which *himself* was entrapped, and make his own ship-wracks a *Sea-mark* for the securing the course of other Passengers. This is the *Effect* of Christs admonition to S. *Peter*, *When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren*; and a piece of that Fraternal charity we all owe

owe to every particular Soul, to whom we have opportunity to diſpence it.

4. But beſides that *private* Obligation, it becomes a duty upon a higher, and more *publick* account, it being the only way to take off that *Scandal* we have brought upon our *Religion*; which as it was not contracted by the *irregularities* of one or two perſons, but by aſſociated and *common crimes*; ſo neither will it be removed by a few ſingle, and private *Reformations*; there muſt be combinations, and publick *Confederacies* in *Vertue*, to balance and counterpoiſe thoſe of *Vice*, or ſhe will never recover that priſtine honour which ſhe acquired by the general Piety of her Profeſſors. In thoſe primitive days there was ſuch an abhorrence of all that was Ill, that a *vicious perſon* was lookt on as a kind of *Monſter* or *Prodigie*, and like a putrified Member cut off, as being not only *dangerous*, but *noiſome* to the Body: But alas, the Scene is ſo chang'd, that the *Church* is now made up of *ſuch* as ſhe would then have *caſt out*; and 'tis now as remarkable an Occurrent to find a *good* Chriſtian, as it was there to ſee a *bad*: And ſince every thing is eſtimated not according to its rare and caſual, but frequent uſual Operations, 'tis eaſie to conclude, that *Chriſtianity* has loſt as much in its *Repute*, as it appears to have done in its *Efficacy*: Nor will there be any way of repairing it, till We be generally rendred ſo malleable to its *impreſſions*, that our Lives may atteſt its *Force* and *Energie*.

5. Nay indeed 'tis not only its *honour*, but its *being* is concern'd in it, active Principles ceaſe to *be* when they ceaſe to *act*. You cannot hinder the fire to burn but by putting it out: And to *ſuppreſs* the Operation of our Religion is indeed to *extinguiſh* it; at leaſt to deprive it of its proper and ſpecifick act: So that if it can be ſaid to be; 'tis only by that abuſe of ſpeech which calls a dead or painted man, a Man: It may perhaps be a *vizor* for the Hypocrite, a *Stale* for the Ambitious, a *waſh* or *tincture* for the Covetous; but where it is *theſe*, it ceaſes to be *it ſelf*. The *eſſence* and *being* of Chriſtianity is *practice*; and according to that Teſt and proof thereof, where almoſt can it be ſaid to Exiſt in the world? We have indeed ſome images and ſhadows of it: Some have taken its *picture*, but the *ſubſtance* and *ſolid body* is vaniſhed, reſolv'd into Air, and ſeems ſadly to have moraliz'd the poetick Fable of *Sibylls* being worn into a voice, *we have turn'd it into a mere noiſe and ſound*; nay, which is worſe, into an *Echo*, that flattering complying voice, which reverberates every mans own language to him: Men dictate to their *Religion*, and then will needs perſwade themſelves and others, that their Religion dictates to *them*, will have the *rebounds* of their own Fancy or Luſt paſs for Divine *Oracles*; ſo ſuborning this Aiery fantaſtick Chriſtianity to legitimate thoſe practices, which the real ſolid one forbids and execrates.

6. To this diſmal forlorn eſtate have we brought that which was deſigned to bring us to bliſs, herein far exceeding the barbarity of the brutiſh *Sodomites*, they would have violated the Meſſengers of their *ruine*, but we thoſe of our *ſafety*: We having not only neglected, but vilified and reproacht the *Embaſſie* ſent us from *Heaven*, and inſtead of *embracing* that purity and peace it recommended to us, have done our Parts to make it *forgotten* that ever it was ſent upon any ſuch Errand; and indeed ſo it is like to be, if ſome *Heroick piety* do not revive its *Memory*, and teach us to record it not ſo much in our *books* as *lives*: There, and there only it will be univerſally legible, there it would indeed appear, what it is in its own nature, *the power of God unto Salvation*.

7. And

7. And now why should we not all Emulously contend, who shall first put off that *ugly vizor* we have put upon our Religion, and restore it to its *native form?* especially considering that with its *Beauty* we lose its *Dowry* too; forfeit all those glorious *Rewards* which it promises to them that preserve it *immaculate.* 'Tis only a *pure* and *undefiled Religion* that will invest us in those *white robes*, wherein we are to follow the *Lamb.* And sure those who have here endeavoured to *darken* and *extinguish* all the rays of Spiritual Light, that have lived as if they profest Christianity merely in spight to *defame* it, must never hope it shall bring them to *shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*, or procure them the *reward* of blameless Souls. No, it promises no other *Crown* than that of *Righteousness*, and therefore they that want the *Righteousness* must want the *Crown* also; Nay, besides that so inestimable a Reversion, they lose all those *present Joys* and *satisfactions* which true Christian practice would afford them, and which both in respect of the *intenseness* and *duration*, infinitely exceed the most *profuse sensualities* the World ever tasted.

8. These are interests that are sure Important enough, and yet we must be *wooed* to consider them, nay, that does not prevail neither, but with a perverse Coyness we *hold off*; all the solicitations and importunate *Calls* of God are lookt upon as *Artifices* and *Designs*, as if he had some Ends of his own to serve upon us, and (as the *Corinthians* suspected S. *Paul*) meant to make a gain of us; we treat with him as if he were the Person to be advantaged, and barter for *Heaven* with such an Indifference, as if *It* would want Us more than *We* It; never considering that 'tis impossible for him to have any other *Concern*, than that which his *Compassion* to us creates, and the more *earnest* and *passionate* That is, the more it should excite our own *care*, it being the Extremest degree of perverse Folly, to *abandon* and *despise* our own Interest merely because a Friend or Patron *considers* and *prizes* it. And this *brand* must lye upon every one of us, who still refuse to discern *the things that belong to our Peace*, after God has done so much to render them not only *visible* but *attainable.*

9. What shall I say more, but conclude with Christs passionate *wish*, that *we might in this our day, understand the things that belong to our Peace*; and O that the *Spirit* of Peace and Light would descend among us, illuminate us with that true *practical Wisdom*, which may convince us, that our *Duty* and *Interest* are the same thing under several forms, and that while we impiously cast off the *one*, we do as foolishly betray the *other*. That so those *inestimable advantages* our Christianity gives towards both, may not be thus madly lost, serve only *as a price in the hand of a Fool, who hath no heart to it*, *Prov.* 17. And to this end let us humbly and earnestly invoke the Father of lights, to *illuminate* all those whom the God of this world hath *blinded*, that after he hath sent into the world the *Image* of his own eternal brightness, caused the *Sun of Righteousness* so long to shine upon us, it may not serve only to involve us in that most *dreadful condemnation*, which awaits those who love *darkness* more than *light*; but that answering the purpose of our *holy calling*, walking as *Children of light*, we may vindicate that *Christian profession* which we have so defamed, secure to our selves the light of *Gods countenance* here, and that of his *glory* hereafter.

FINIS.

PRIVATE

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS REFERRING To the ſeveral parts of the before-going Treatiſe.

TO THE READER.

IT is to be hoped that as this Treatiſe entertain'd many; it has alſo had an effect much more deſirable, though leſs comprehenſive, to mend and convince ſome. And whilſt it gave an account of the general DECAY OF CHRISTIAN PIETY *in the* Preſent *Age; has alſo invited a few at leaſt, to its purſuit and ſervice. Upon theſe hopes the* Author *has been perſwaded to add this ſhort* Specimen *of* PRIVATE DEVOTIONS, *that if the ſober and conſidering Reader ſhall at any time find his heart toucht and ſoftned, he may have in readineſs wherewith to actuate his holy flames, and aſſiſt him in his addreſſes to the Throne of Grace.*

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS

Referring to the ſeveral parts of the before-going Treatiſe.

O BLESSED Lord, who art infinitely holy and happy in thy ſelf, and from whom alone we derive the poſſibilities of being either; we proſtrate our ſelves before thee, in an humble adoration of thy abundant goodneſs, and a juſt confuſion at our own deteſtable ingratitude: We were aliens and enemies to thee by our corrupt affections, and ungodly works, yet even to us haſt thou been reconciled, nay bought the atonement with the precious bloud of thy dear Son: Thou haſt ſent him to be the propitiation for our ſins; and (which is no leſs mercy) to be the ſubduer of them too, ſenteſt him by his divine Example and admirable Precepts, to bleſs us in turning every one of us from his iniquities. Thou haſt given us a Law ſo perfect, ſo excellent, as renders our obediences their own reward, and yet ſuperaddeſt alſo an eternal weight of glory to be its future retribution: And leſt our brutal temper ſhould not be attracted by all this, thou haſt hedg'd up our way with thorns, annext a preſent uneaſineſs, and ſubſequent danger to our deviations, ſo by the menaces of Hell eſſaying to fright us into Heaven: And to actuate and enliven all theſe methods, thou addeſt the internal aſſiſtances of thy Grace and Spirit to excite us to good, to reſtrain and avert us from ill, and finally advance us to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. And now, O Lord, after all theſe obligations, all theſe aids, what manner of perſons ought we to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs? But alas, to our eternal reproach, we have ſignaliz'd our ſelves by contrary practice; blaſphem'd that holy Name whereby we are call'd, and by our enormous lives, ſcandaliz'd our profeſſion, and made it as eminent for vice, as it ſhould have been (and once was) for virtue. Our knowledge of thy will ſerves only to inform us, wherein we may moſt oppoſe it; and while we call

call our ſelves Chriſtians, we commit ſuch things as are not ſo much as named among the Gentiles. Nay, O Lord, ſo little do we retain of the power of Godlineſs, that the greateſt part of Men have now caſt off the very form, deny the Lord that bought them, trample upon all that is ſacred; and not only think but loudly ſay there is no God. Thus inſtead of regulating our manners by our faith, we model our faith by our manners, and reap nothing by our Chriſtianity, but the guilt of Apoſtaſie, and the fearful expectation of that fiery indignation which awaits thoſe who have thus trampled under foot the Son of God, and done deſpight to the Spirit of Grace. And now, O Lord, when the foundations are caſt down, what can the righteous do? What counterpoiſe can the groans and tears of thoſe few who mourn in *Sion* be to ſuch general, ſuch daring impieties? Yet, O God, thou haſt in all ages ſtrangely condeſcended to the interceſſion of thy Servants. O bow thy Heaven again and come down, and hear the prayers of thoſe who deſire to fear thy name: And let them not only deliver their own Souls, but obtain mercy for this perverſe generation, even ſuch a mighty grace as may yet reduce us. O thou who didſt at firſt call us out of Darkneſs into thy marvellous light, recal us now from that worſe darkneſs, wherein we have involved our ſelves, put thy Laws a-new in our hearts, and write them in our minds: And after ſo many Years, ſo many Ages of being call'd Chriſtians, let us at laſt begin to be ſo. Revive, O Lord, that Primitive zeal and ſanctity, which may purifie us to thy ſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works. And O thou bleſſed Mediator, who prayedſt for thy firſt crucifiers, intercede alſo for us, who have under the name of Diſciples crucified thee afreſh: And though we have nothing to ſay for our ſelves, cannot pretend that we knew not what we did; yet let thy ſtripes and wounds, thy croſs and paſſion plead for us. Thou didſt once lead captivity captive, O ſtir up thy ſtrength again, and let not Satan now triumph in thy ſpoils, and deſecrate thy Church which thou haſt purchaſed with thine own bloud. O let thy bleſſed Spirit breath again upon us, that even theſe dry bones may live in thy ſight: Let him ſo effectually convince and reprove, illuminate and excite us, that we may cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, walk worthy of that holy vocation wherewith we are called, and be capable of thoſe glorious rewards which are prepar'd for thoſe who fight a good fight, finiſh their courſe, and keep the Faith: Where we ſhall ceaſe to grieve, to ſuffer, and to ſin; but never ceaſe to live and to be happy: Singing perpetual *Hallelujahs* to him that ſits upon the Throne, to the holy Spirit, and to the Lamb for evermore.

A LITANY.

O GOD the Father of Heaven, the God of Angels and of Men, the Father of compaſſions, of conſolation and life;

Have mercy upon us miſerable ſinners.

O God the Son, the Eternal well-beloved Son, by whom the ſinful race of Men become the Sons of God;

Have mercy upon us, &c.

O God the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit of comfort, of holineſs and grace, by whom we receive the Adoption, and the earneſt of our hope;

Have mercy upon us, &c.

O Holy, Bleſſed and Glorious Trinity, diſtinguiſht as in Perſon, ſo in the various

various diſpenſations of the work of our Redemption; united as in Eſſence, ſo in the acts of kindneſs and compaſſion to Men;

Have mercy upon us, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to create in us clean hearts, and to renew a right ſpirit within us, to reſcue us from all the deceits of the World, the Devil and our own Hearts.

We beſeech thee to hear us good Lord.

That it may pleaſe thee to grant that all who have been baptiz'd into Chriſt, may indeed put on Chriſt; ſeriouſly weigh, and induſtriouſly anſwer the obligation of their holy calling; not reſt in the form and outſide of Religion, whilſt by a wretchleſs inconſideration they enervate the power and efficacy thereof.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee ſo to guide our conſideration, that we do not thereby ſo enſnare our ſelves, entertain thoſe deluſions which flatter us with hopes of reward, without performing duty; but that by an impartial advertency to all thy Sacred dictates, we may be engag'd to a conſtant, entire obedience, and work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to open our Eyes that we may ſee the wondrous things of thy Law, to convince us that it is holy, juſt and good, ſweeter than hony and the hony-comb, and that all our objections to it ariſe only from our being carnal and ſold under ſin.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to remove all our carnal prejudices, and vicious prepoſſeſſions; and to enable us to meaſure thy precepts by the rules of right reaſon, and an illuminated conſcience, according to the analogy of thy holy faith once delivered to the Saints.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to inſpirit us by thy grace, that we may not only approve, but obey thy commands, conquer all the diſcouragements of ſloth or vice, and chearfully ſet to the practice of Chriſtian duty, that ſo we may experimentally find how ſweet the Lord is.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to put thy fear in our hearts, that we may never depart from thee, but equally obey thee in all things, not indulging to any favourite ſin, but entirely reſign and captivate every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to take theſe ſtony hearts out of us, and to give us hearts of Fleſh; ſuch as may melt at the apprehenſion of our ſins and thy diſpleaſure.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to endue us with a right Judgment, that we deceive not our ſelves with ſhews and formalities of repentance; but bring forth indeed fruits meet for it.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to awake us from our ſupine and dangerous dependence on a future repentance, and make us in this our day diſcern and embrace the things belonging to our Peace, ſo anſwering thy preſent calls, that we may not at laſt call when thou ſhalt only laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to poſſeſs our Souls with a juſt reverence, and right apprehenſions of thy Eſſence and Attributes, that we may not form our belief of thee by our own fancies or wiſhes, but by thoſe revelations thou haſt given of thy ſelf in thy word.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to reſtrain our bold Curioſity in prying into thy counſels and decrees, and make us wiſe unto Sobriety, reſerving ſecret things unto the Lord our God, and ſtudying the revealed ones for the regulating of our lives.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to give us ſuch an awe of thy juſtice, that we may fear to provoke it, not expecting thou ſhouldſt repent of thy judgments, when we do not of our ſins, nor fancying that any milder vengeance attends our final obſtinacy than unquenchable fire.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to grant us ſuch a ſenſe of thy mercy, that we may never ſay there is no hope, or excuſe our incorrigibleneſs by our deſperation, but that the goodneſs of God may lead us to repentance, yet let us never ſo preſume on it, as to ſin that Grace may abound.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to enable us with all due regard to obſerve, and humility to adore, the diſpenſations of thy Providence, not pretending to fathom thy ſecret intendments, but endeavouring ſo to comply with all ſignal diſcoveries of thy purpoſes towards us, that what thou deſigneſt for our wealth, may not be to us an occaſion of falling.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee, that from every event, whether National or Perſonal, we may ſtill infer the obligation and neceſſity of turning from our ſins; that gratitude for paſt mercies may allure us to good, and fear of impending Judgments may drive us from evil.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to inſpire the univerſal Church with the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Concord, that there may be no diviſions among us; but that we may be perfectly joyn'd together, in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee, whereinſoever any are contrary minded, to reveal thy truth to them; and in the interim ſo to allay thoſe heats our differences have caus'd, that amidſt the diverſities of judgment, we may keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to deliver us from all the unhappy effects of our contentions, and to purge us from all the criminous cauſes of them, and ſo to heal our breaches, that *Jeruſalem* may again become a City at unity in it ſelf.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to grant that we no longer dote about queſtions, and ſtrifes of words whereof cometh Envy, Railing, evil Surmiſes; but ſo buſie our ſelves in practick duties, that we may not fear when our Lord comes to be found ſo doing.

We beſeech thee, &c.

Son of God we beſeech thee to hear us.

O Lamb of God that takeſt away the ſins of the world;

Grant us thy Peace.

O Lamb of God that takeſt away the ſins of the world;
Have mercy upon us.
O Chriſt hear us.

Lord have mercy upon us.
Chriſt have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.

OUR *Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name,* &c.

O Lord deal not with us after our Sins.
Neither reward us after our Iniquities,

ALmighty God, who ſheweſt to them that be in Error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return to the way of righteouſneſs: Grant unto all them that be admitted to the fellowſhip of Chriſts Religion, that they may eſchew thoſe things which be contrary to their profeſſion, and follow all ſuch things as are agreeable to the ſame, through *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord.

O Merciful Saviour, who ſo lovedſt thy Church, as to give thy ſelf for her, look again on her with thy compaſſionate eyes, who now needs a ſecond redemption, even a reſcue from her ſelf, from the unnatural iſſue of her own bowels. Lord thou ſeeſt the miſerable ſtate to which ſhe is reduced, by our wild contentions, that ſhe has at once loſt her purity, and her peace, and is become an *Aceldama*, a field of bloud, Lord where is thy pity and the ſounding of thy bowels towards her, are they reſtrained? O remember thy old loving kindneſs, the love of thy eſpouſals, and as thou wert once a Lamb to expiate her guilts, ſo be thou now a Lion to vindicate her wrongs; ſtrike a dread into the hearts of all, who have contributed to her ruine, and make them know that whoſo touches her, toucheth the apple of thine Eye. O let not her ſtill ſink under the oppreſſion of our ſordid deſigns, and irregular appetites, nor be devoured by thoſe who pretend to guard her. Give her Paſtors after thine own heart; let her Prieſts be cloath'd with righteouſneſs, and waſh their hands in innocence before they compaſs thine Altar. O let not any vain ambition for themſelves, make them expoſe and proſtitute the honour of their God: No affectation of that knowledge which puffeth up, divert them from that Charity which only edifieth: Grant that the intereſt of Religion may ſtill be uppermoſt in their hearts, and never vail to Secular ends, nor the pretence of truth cloak any exorbitant paſſion. Nay, O Lord, refine even their Zeal, and make it ſerve to kindle, not conſume their Charity: And to inſpirit them with ſuch an unwearied induſtry, that they may always abound in the work of the Lord, diligently take heed to thoſe flocks, over whom the Holy Ghoſt has made them overſeers; never turning aſide to vain jangling, or ſtriving about words to no profit. And to all who are under their charge, give meekneſs to ſubmit to thoſe who by thy appointment watch their Souls; ſuppreſs all prejudices and faction, and let none be puffed up for one againſt another, but grant that by a due attendance on their callings, both as men and Chriſtians they may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty. And, Lord, let both Prieſt and People ſo follow after the things that make for peace, that we may adorn the doctrine of our God and Saviour, take off the Scandal our diviſions have given to thoſe that are without, and again evidence our relation to the Prince of Peace: And O that our ways were made thus di-

rect, but alas, how little diſpoſition have we towards it? This change muſt be only the work of that mighty power, which is able to ſubdue all things to its ſelf: And yet, O Lord, with what face can we beg of thee to force us to that happineſs, which we ſtill reſolve to reſiſt? What can we then ſay unto thee O thou preſerver, thou redeemer of men, who have put our ſelves beyond all the ordinary methods of thy grace? We can only lay our ſelves at thy feet; diſplay our miſery, and leave thee to conſider thine own compaſſion: O let that move thee to do for us whatever our wretched eſtate is in need of; O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, conſider and do it, if not for ours, yet for thy Names ſake: Thou art *Jeſus* a Saviour, ſave thy people from their ſin, and let us not ſlide back by a perpetual backſliding; thou art the head of the Church, O abandon not thy body, careſt thou not that ſhe periſh? Turn thee again, O Lord, renew her days as of old, ſanctifie and cleanſe her, that thou mayeſt again preſent her to thy ſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, and if ſhe muſt ſtill be militant, let it no longer be within her ſelf, but againſt ſpiritual wickednesſes, the ruler of the darkneſs of this world; till at laſt thou utterly beat down Satan under her feet; and tranſlate her from this ſtate of warfare, to that of Triumph, and bliſs in the Kingdom of thy Father; which thou O bleſſed *Jeſus* haſt purchaſed with thy Bloud, and ſealed by thy Spirit. To which bleſſed Trinity be aſcrib'd all praiſe, honour, and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

O MOST gracious Lord, who out of thy boundleſs compaſſion to thy creatures, art never wanting in any means that may draw them to thy ſelf, we the unworthieſt of them deſire to give glory to thee, in a hearty acknowledgment that thou haſt in a moſt eminent and peculiar manner abounded to us of this Nation, afforded us all the methods that might either force or allure us to obedience. Lord thou wert pleaſed to keep us many years under thy chaſtening hand, thou broughteſt us into the ſnare and layedſt trouble upon our loins, and didſt at once upbraid and puniſh our voluntary ſlaveries to our own luſts, by giving us up a prey to thoſe of others: And when thoſe judgments which ſhould have melted, ſerv'd but to harden us; when we ſeemed emulous to have our ſins out-vye thy Plagues, as they had before thy mercies, what could we then expect, but to find a judgment worthy of God? Such an irreverſible ruine, as might render us an hiſſing and aſtoniſhment to the whole Earth? But when we were thus ripened for thy greateſt ſeverity, then didſt thou, O Lord, prevent us with the bleſſings of thy goodneſs, miraculouſly interpoſe for our reſcue, and by ſuch undiſcernable ways return the captivity of our *Sion*, that we were deliver'd like them that dream. This, O Lord, was ſo ſtupendous, ſo amazing a mercy, that nothing can be more admirable, but only our prodigious ingratitude: Thou haſt ſignally atteſted thy ſelf to be a God that doſt wonders, and yet we who enjoy the benefit of them, neither conſider them as wonders, nor thee as God; but Atheiſtically defie that Providence by which we ſubſiſt. Thou haſt reſtored to us our ſolemn worſhip, and we now ſay what a wearineſs is it? can ſeldom afford it our preſence, and ſeldomer our hearts. Thou haſt broken the yoke of uſurping oppreſſors, and we murmur no leſs at our lawful governours, as if all that we deſired to reap by the exchange, were the guilt of ſpeaking evil of Dignities. Thou haſt freed us from the burden of unlawful impoſed oaths; and we daily rend thy ſacred name by voluntary impertinent ones. Thou haſt delivered our eſtates from the rapine of

others,

others, and we ſacrifice them to our own riot, and are never the more open-handed to our poor brethren for all thy munificence to us. Thou haſt reſtor'd us the liberty of our Perſons, and we proclaim licence to our luſts. Theſe are the degenerous and baſe returns we have made; thus, O thus have we requited the Lord, and by it have again forc'd thee to reſume thy ſcourge, and by a ſucceſſion of ſignal judgments atteſt thy diſpleaſure. And yet O Lord, who regardeth the power of thy wrath? Who is there that repenteth him of his ways, or ſaith, what have I done? Never any ſoil made ſo ill return to ſo much husbandry, and ſince we bring forth nothing but Briars and Thorns, we may ſurely conclude we are nigh unto curſing: And, O Lord, what can we plead to avert the Sentence, who are as far from penitence as innocence, or how can we pray againſt that vengeance, which we make it our buſineſs to pull down? Nay, O Lord, ſhouldſt thou as miraculouſly prolong, as thou didſt reſtore our Peace, yet what will that avail us, if it ſerve but to ſet us at greater hoſtility with thee? Bleſſed Lord, there is but one mercy that we are capable of, and that is the melting our hearts, and if that cannot be done, but by caſting us into a yet more fiery furnace; Lord do that or any thing with us, ſo we may come out veſſels of honour meet for thy ſervice. But yet, O Lord, if thy gentler methods may have any effect, be pleas'd to continue thy long-ſuffering; and though we have no pretence to mercy, yet do thou aſſert thine own work, be merciful becauſe thou haſt been ſo, and ſuffer us not to deſtroy what thou haſt ſo miraculouſly preſerv'd. Finally, O Lord, diſpenſe to us whatſoever thou ſeeſt moſt apt to reduce us; and that thy outward applications may be no longer in vain, enforce and enliven them with thy inward: And by the ſweet inſinuations of thy bleſſed Spirit, ſubdue our obſtinate perverſeneſs; and give us at laſt ſuch grace, as we may not turn into wantonneſs. O thou to whom all things are poſſible, who haſt done ſuch wonderful things for us, work a yet greater miracle in us, and of a profane, ungrateful, licentious Nation, make us an holy people unto thy ſelf, that all ranks and conditions of men, may as univerſally and induſtriouſly combine to propitiate, as they have to provoke thee: That ſo by bringing forth fruits of Repentance, we may eſcape thy wrath both temporal and eternal. Grant this for his ſake who died to work that deliverance for us: *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS.

THE GENTLEMAN'S CALLING.

Written by the Author
OF THE
Whole Duty of Man.

1 Cor. vii. 24.

Ἕκαστος ἐν ᾧ ἐκλήθη, ἀδελφοὶ, ἐν τούτῳ μενέτω παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ.

LONDON,
Printed by *Roger Norton*, for *Robert Pawlet*, at the Sign of the Bible in *Chancery-Lane*, near *Fleetſtreet*, 1683.

THE GENTLEMAN'S CALLING.

Written by the Author

OF THE

Whole Duty of Man.

1 Cor. vii. 24.

"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

LONDON:

Printed by Roger Norton, for Robert Pawlet, at the Sign of the Bible in Chancery-Lane, near Fleet-street, 1678.

THE PREFACE.

1. THE Authority of Cuſtom hath ſo much a more general prevalency than that of Truth; that he that ſhall adventure to aſſault that with this, may be thought not to have well digeſted the prudent Caution of our Saviour, Luke 14. 31. To ſit down and conſider whether he be able with ten thouſand to meet him that cometh againſt him with twenty thouſand; for doubtleſs ſuch, and much greater is the odds between theſe two Litigants. And to the imputation of this unwarineſs I cannot but foreſee the preſent Deſign very liable. *Cuſtom more prevalent than Truth.*

2. Gentility has long ſince confuted Job's Aphoriſm, Man is born to labour, and inſtead thereof, has pronounced to its Clients the Rich man's Requiem, Soul take thine eaſe, eat, drink and be merry. A Gentleman is now ſuppoſed to be only a thing of pleaſure, a creature ſent into the World, as the Leviathan into the deep, to take his paſtime therein, (and the better to complete the Parallel, to devour his underlings too) and then 'twill be no wonder if it be adjudged a ridiculous Solœciſm to attempt to define his Calling, whoſe very Eſſence is thought to conſiſt in having none. Nay, perhaps it will be deemed not only abſurd but malicious, a Levelling project, of robbing him of his Birth-right, of degrading him from thoſe priviledges, which belong to his quality, and of moulding him again into that vulgar Maſs, from which Divine Providence and humane Laws have diſtinguiſhed him. But from this jealouſie I dare truſt the enſuing leaves to be their own Vindicators. *Gentlemen are ſeldom bred up to any thing but their pleaſure.*

3. I have been no unconcerned (much leſs inſulting) Spectator of the Depreſſion the Gentry have fallen under in theſe latter years, but have paid them my juſt Tribute of compaſſion: Yet I confeſs I think thoſe ſcarce worthy a regret, in compariſon with thoſe voluntary deſcents, too many of them have made from true worth and vertue. 'Tis ſure a far leſs deplorable ſpectacle to ſee a Gentleman ſpoiled of his Fortune by his Conſcience, than his Luxury, and to behold him under the ſtroke of the Headſman, than under thoſe more infamous Executioners, his Luſt, or Intemperance. Yet I fear if the Martyrologie even of theſe ſuffering Times were ſcanned, Venus and Bacchus would be found to have had many more Martyrs, than God and Loyalty. *The vices of Gentlemen degrade them more than their calamities,*

4. But I confeſs it an impertinence thus to balance the two miſchiefs of doing and ſuffering ill, ſince 'tis certain the latter is to be reſolved into the former, and has no exiſtence of it ſelf, but what it derives from that. Puniſhments are but the reſults of ſin: And therefore whatever Malignity is in the Effect, becomes entirely chargeable upon the Cauſe, and we are to look upon our Vice not only as our greateſt, but our only unhappineſs. This Conſideration ſhews us the ſource of all our Sufferings, and is it ſelf no leſs obvious, than thoſe; though one would think it as concealed as the head of Nilus, that ſhould only obſerve how many other Originals of our Calamities are aſſigned, whilſt this is ſcarce dreamt of. This Jonah is ſuffered to ſleep ſecurely in the Ship, while her more innocent Fraught *and though ſeldom taken notice of, yet are one main cauſe of their Sufferings.*

is cast over-board, *Jonah* 1. 5. *Every the leaſt ſparkle from without is charged as an Incendiary, when alas, like* Ætna, *our own bowels ſend out that fire, which has ſo near reduced us to aſhes. But as in Diſeaſes we account the Diſcovery of the Cauſe the firſt and moſt neceſſary ſtep to the Cure; ſo certainly is it here, the conviction of our guilt is a moſt indiſpenſable Preparative towards the eaſe of our Preſſures, and we muſt be* heavy laden *in the Chriſtian ſence,* Matth. 11. 28. *before we ſhall ceaſe to be ſo in the Civil.*

and therefore ought to be deſtroyed and cut off as the Troublers of our Iſrael

5. *But I fear men proceed in this affair rather like Mountebanks than good Phyſicians, uſe ſome Palliating Medicines to allay the effects, or perhaps Anodynes to ſtupefie the Patient, and wholly neglect the Root of the Malady. Nor do I appropriate this Error to the* Gentry, *'tis too viſible that all ſorts and qualities have too juſt a claim to it, to let any one go away with the Incloſure. But becauſe the preſent Deſign makes them my peculiar Province, I ſhall, waving all others, addreſs my ſelf at this time to them only, with this moſt paſſionate Requeſt, that they would not uſe that cruelty to themſelves, for which* Amalek *ſtands branded towards* Iſrael, Deut. 25. 18. *by their perſevering Impieties ſmite and deſtroy thoſe feeble and faint Remains of their former Felicities; but that they would now at laſt ſeriouſly advert to this their ſo great and important concernment, and pitch upon the true* Achan, *that has thus long* troubled their Iſrael. *And that being done, that ſtory directs the next ſtep of the Proceſs, even the bringing him to execution, cutting that off, which will elſe infallibly bring down a Fatal Exciſion upon themſelves. Nor is this to be deferred, for alas the Diſeaſe is come to too great a height, too dangerous a* Criſis, *to admit any delay of the Remedy.*

The greatneſs of our judgments and nearneſs to deſtruction, ought to be an argument to Repent of our Sins,

6. *When* Egypt *had ſmarted under a ſucceſſion of miraculous plagues for detaining the* Iſraelites, *the Servants of* Pharaoh *importune him to releaſe them, and conclude their advice with this Pathetique enforcement,* Knoweſt not thou yet that *Egypt* is deſtroyed? *And God knows I may but too properly give the ſame edge to mine; For alas,* Gentlemen, *are not your Eſtates waſted, your Priviledges violated, your Splendors eclipſed, your Perſons reſtrained, your Families broken and ſhattered, your Dignities trampled upon by the meaneſt of the Vulgar, and finally your ſelves quite tranſpoſed in your ſtation, now made the* Tail who were once the Head, Deut. 28. 44. *And is it not yet time to diſmiſs thoſe Sins which are the Authors of all this? If you are ſtill of* Pharaoh's *mind, and reſolve to retain them, you are certainly no leſs obſtinate than he, but much more irrational. He had ſomewhat of viſible advantage to tempt him to detain the* Iſraelites, *they were his Slaves, wrought hard at his work, built him Cities. But how far is that from the Caſe here! They are not your Slaves, but your Taſkmaſters, which you are ſo unwilling to part with, thoſe that ſet you to the vileſt and moſt ſervile Drudgeries, and are ſo far from bringing you in profit, that I may boldly make the Apoſtles challenge,* Rom. 6. 21. What fruit have you had of thoſe things? *And doubt not the only account you can bring in of your Harveſt, muſt be the Inventory of your Miſeries. We are witneſſes of many Houſes, many Cities they have demoliſh'd and laid waſte, but we have no ſtructure of theirs to ſhew, but a* Babel *of Confuſion.*

which have endanger'd the Ruine of the Church, and places of Gods Worſhip;

7. *But alas, theſe your ſecular Ruines are but their modeſt and petty outrages. Take another view of them, and it will like* Ezekiel's *Viſion,* Ezek. 6. 8. *preſent you with more and* greater abominations than theſe, *even the* abomination of deſolation in the holy place. *Your ſins have not only deſolated your own houſes, but Gods. That* Beauty of his Ornament *which he ſet in* Majeſty, Ezek. 7. 20. *hath by theſe your deteſtable things been expoſed to ſpoil and pollution. We are not yet grown ſo old in our miſeries as to have out-worn the aggravation of remembring our happier eſtate. And how ſad, how wounding a contemplation is it to compare the paſt and preſent condition of* This *Church? When the*

Temple

Temple *was rebuilding, the joy of that reſtauration could not ſuppreſs the grief of thoſe who remembred the ſo much more Glorious Fabrick of the firſt, but they laid the foundation in their tears, the Text ſays,* They wept with a loud voice, Nehem. 3. 12. *But what tears, what ejulations can be bitter or loud enough for us, who are to lament not partial and imperfect repairs, but total ruines and vaſtations, that ſee the materials of our* Sion *now reduced to duſt and rubbiſh, who once ſaw them happily compacted, built together as a* City at unity in it ſelf.

8. *And while we thus* remember Sion, *and are our ſelves* by the waters of Babylon, *'tis ſure but proper we* ſit down and weep, *bid, as thoſe Captives,* Pſal. 137. *a ſolemn Adieu to all entertainments of joy and pleaſure. And would God we all, particularly you to whom I now ſpeak, did as exactly parallel them in this ſad and pious reſentment, as we do in the motives of it, that ſo your quarrel to ſin might be accended to its full height, as that which robs you not only of your ſpiritual, but (that which many of you have more guſt of) your carnal joys alſo. 'Tis your ſins, I would I could ſay yours alone, which have been the perſecuting* Sauls, *that have thus* made havock of the Church. *The* Securities, Profaneneſs, *and* Licentiouſneſs *of your proſperous days made the firſt breaches in her walls: And now the* Impenitence *and incorrigibleneſs of your calamitous, like the* Edomites, cry down with her, down with her even to the ground. *'Twas amongſt the Jews a* Capital Guilt *to* curſe *a* Parent, *and ſhall it now paſs for an eaſie, or no crime, not only to curſe but deſtroy our common Mother, to abet and maintain thoſe troops which thus deſie, yea invade her? O why ſhould you not at laſt recal your exiled Piety, and aſſume a holy and becoming indignation againſt theſe her cruel, her implacable Enemies?*

and ought therefore to draw forth our Zeal and Indignation againſt them.

9. *But this you cannot be ſuppoſed to do, whilſt you arraign only* other *mens ſins, and leave your* own *out of the Indictment. I doubt not many of you do with diſpleaſure, perhaps more than enough, charge her ruine upon the immediate Inſtruments, accuſe the bold Intruſion of ignorant Teachers, of having depraved her* Doctrine; *Ambition and Envy of impatient Inferiors, of ſubverting her* Diſcipline; *the Pride and Faction of buſie Spirits, of diſturbing her* Peace; *the greedy Avarice of Sacrilegious perſons, of devouring her* Patrimony. *And theſe I ſhall not deny to have been the* Weapons *that thus have mortally wounded her. But let it be remembred, that theſe were wielded and whetted by the more general impieties, from whence they borrowed their deſtructive power. And therefore to* transfer *the guilt here, is but the artifice of ſlaying* Uriah with the Sword of the Children of Ammon, *which you know acquitted not* David *from being a Murderer. No, God knows, here lies a Carkaſs of a poor bleeding* Church, *but which of you our Elders are qualified for the purgation the Law aſſigns in that caſe,* Deut. 21. 8. *which of you can ſay,* our hands have not ſhed this bloud, neither have our eyes ſeen it?

every man muſt acknowledge that his own ſins have had a hand in the publick calamity:

10. *Yet the leſs capable you are of thus* waſhing your hands in innocence, *the greater need you have to* waſh *them in* Penitence, *and therefore ſince as you are* Sons *to this* Mother, *the Office of* Avenger of bloud *devolves on you*; O bring forth fruits of Repentance, *by diſcharging that part faithfully*; *drag out theſe* Criminals *which have taken* Sanctuary *in your breaſts, and there dwell ſecurely, as in a* City *of* Refuge, *and* hew them in pieces, *as* Samuel *did* Agag before the Lord. *And as your incentives to this are infinitely greater and more preſſing, than in other* murders, *ſo will the effects alſo vaſtly tranſcend thoſe of common Juſtice. That only revenges; but this may repair the miſchief, recal the vital ſpirits, and reunite the ſcattered limbs of this mangled body. Such an Omnipotency is there in ſincere Repentance, that it is able even to effect a Reſurrection. O that you would be ambitious of working this Miracle, and by this pious Prodigie beget your* Mother, *that you would weep*

And the leſs Innocent we are, the more Humble and Penitent we ought to be;

ſo long over her aſhes, till that moiſture had rendred them prolifical, *and you ſee her ſpring out of her* Urn.

which is the only way to prevent both our own Ruine, and that of the Churches too.

11. *This, this is your only way of reverſing that extirpating* Decree, *which theſe* Hamans *(your ſins) have procured. And if you neglect this,* Mordecai's *menace to* Heſter *will be too applicable to you: If God in his unfathomable mercy ſhould* cauſe deliverance *and enlargement* to ariſe from ſome other place *to this poor deſolate Church, yet your ſelves can expect nothing but Deſtruction. If you have no ſenſe of the deſolations of* Sion, no pity to ſee her in the Duſt, *but ſtill chuſe to cheriſh thoſe impieties which have brought her thither; yet even they will at the laſt, avenge her quarrel, bring you thoſe miſeries, the ſenſe whereof it will be impoſſible for you to avoid, or extinguiſh.*

Sin is the cauſe both of Temporal and Eternal miſery;

12. *For alas, to repreſent your ſins to you as the Originals merely of Temporal, whether Private or Publick Ruines, is to give you too fair and flattering a pourtraicture of them: Theſe are but the light preluſory skirmiſhes to a more diſmal ſlaughter, the Prologue to the Fatal Tragedy. Take their full character from the Apoſtle,* Rom. 6. 21. The end of thoſe things is death, *even death eternal. It is our uſual comfort againſt the perſecutions of men, that they can purſue us no farther than to the grave: There, as* Job *ſpeaks,* the weary be at reſt. *But this Tyrant in our own breaſts has no ſuch limits to its malice, but then eſpecially begins, when all other cruelties ceaſe, tortures infinitely by the gnawings of that* worm which never dies, *and the ſcorchings of that* fire which never *ſhall be* quenched.

which to cheriſh and Indulge, is the greateſt folly and madneſs in the World.

13. *And now who can ſufficiently wonder at the infatuation, that You ſhould demur upon the diſmiſſing of ſo treacherous a Gueſt, that You ſhould cheriſh this Viper in your boſoms, which You already feel eating your Bowels, devouring all your temporal felicities, and yet takes thoſe but in the way to your Heart, your more precious and eternal part? 'Tis the common Maxim even of thoſe that receive advantage by the perfidiouſneſs of others, to love the Treaſon, but hate the Traitor: But here is that Rule quite inverted; You hate the Treaſon, are impatient of the afflicting conſequences of your ſin, yet love the Traitor, hug that in your cloſeſt Embraces. The Apoſtle indeed forewarns us of the* Deceitfulneſs of ſin, *Heb. 3. 13. but ſure this is a pitch beyond that; this is not deceit, but inchantment, ſome powerful* Philtrum *it muſt needs be, that can thus make men in love not only with deformity but diſeaſe.*

Virtue is naturally more amiable and delightful than Vice.

14. *But all the* Magicians of Egypt are not able to ſtand before Moſes, *this Magick is not ſo irreſiſtible, but that Reaſon and Religion will yield You countercharms, able to diſ-inchant You, if You will but ſuffer them to come in to your aid. Do but once ſtep out of the Devils Circle, the actual vertiginous purſuit of your ſinful appetites, and give your Faculties ſome intermiſſion, ſo much breath from that hot chaſe as may qualifie them for a calm conſiderate view of other things, and then 'tis certain you will diſcern, that Vertue has a much more raviſhing appearance, infinitely more delectable and enamouring, than all the Devils* Opticks *could put upon your higheſt and moſt guſtful ſenſualities. Do you only beſtow ſome attentive looks upon her; let her once in at your eyes, and then leave her to make her own way to your heart. And this is ſure a very moderate requeſt; that You will but vouchſafe to look upon what is thus amiable. And with what pretence can you deny it? You who to gaze on thoſe tranſitory Beauties which are only your ſnares, ſtick at no difficulty, will be content to come (thoſe of you that have no other motives) even to Church upon that errand: O do not here put off your curioſity, where alone it may avail you, but rather take this opportunity of hallowing that (hitherto profane) part of your temper.*

The Devil is apt to beget prejudice in mens minds againſt Religion.

15. *It has been none of the Devils meaneſt or unluckieſt Arts to infuſe prejudices into mens minds againſt* Chriſtian Practice, *by repreſenting it in the moſt averting*

averting Forms. He changes ſhapes with it, and as he transforms himſelf into an Angel of light, ſo he does this into one of Darkneſs, makes it appear a State of the moſt diſmal ſadneſs and horror, a region of Antipodes to all Joy and chearfulneſs. And how much more ready men are to take the Devil at his word than Chriſt at his, who profeſſes his Yoke eaſie and his Burden light, appears too viſible in the general averſeneſs thoſe have to Piety, who never ſo much as tried it, but take up implicit confuſed prejudices againſt it, and retain thoſe as faſt, as if they were the products of many years coſtly experiences. And 'tis to be feared, theſe have taken the deepeſt root in the richeſt Soil, they ſeeming no where more to flouriſh, than among you of the higheſt Quality. Yet ſure, of all others, You are moſt obliged to eradicate them, they implying ſuch a groſs injuſtice, as any ingenuous mind muſt be aſhamed of.

16. You will your ſelves readily pronounce that Judge not only corrupt, but impudent, that condemns a perſon whoſe cauſe he never heard: Yet if You will but reflect, you will find your own verdict rebound upon your ſelves, with a Tu es homo; for 'tis evidently your caſe here. It is time for you therefore to be ſo juſt, if not to Vertue, yet to your own Reputations, as to retract that condemnatory ſentence, you have paſt upon her, and put on ſo much at leaſt of the form of Juſtice, as to give her a fair Trial. But this you cannot do by hearing the tongues of men and Angels plead for her, none but her ſelf can manage her cauſe, you muſt admit her into your ſociety and converſe, take her into ſuch a familiarity, as may bring her within diſtance of your Obſervation, before you pronounce of her. In ſhort, if you will indeed render your ſelves competent Judges, whether a Vertuous life be a pleaſant or a diſmal thing, enter upon it, and let your own experiences be your informers.

None are fit to judge of Religion, till they have made trial thereof.

17. I cannot ſuſpect the Age ſo degenerous, as not to believe there are divers particular perſons among you, who have made the experiment, and to their Teſtimony I dare appeal, and doubt not they will from Judges turn Advocates, and recommend it to you, and ſure you will have no cauſe in this inſtance to wave your wonted Priviledge of being tried by your Peers, to except againſt their judgment in the caſe, who being placed in equal circumſtances with you, muſt be ſuppoſed to underſtand your utmoſt Temptations to Vice, from whence alone all the ſeeming difficulties and uneaſineſſes of Vertue do ariſe.

18. It were the work of many Volumes to deſcribe the ſeveral diſtinct Advantages towards a pleaſant Being, which are wrapt up in this one comprehenſive Felicity. I ſhall inſtance only in that, to which the enſuing Tract particularly relates, and that is, that it furniſhes you with a ſucceſſion of very agreeable and chearful Imployments. Vertue is of a buſie and active Nature, and as in its ſeveral Operations it has an oppoſition to all the ſeveral ſorts of Vice, ſo in its very Conſtitution and Principle it bears an avowed Antipathy to that one fertile Seminary of moſt other Sins, Idleneſs; and ſure the reſcuing you from that is no contemptible Benefit. For though you ſeem to challenge it as a conſiderable part of your Inheritance, that you may live and do Nothing, and are very tenacious of that Claim; yet, 'tis moſt evident, that what you contend for, as your Priviledge, your ſelves eſteem your burden, yea ſo much ſo, that to be rid of it you caſt away Eſtate, Health, Soul and all for company, imploy your ſelves the moſt ruinouſly, rather than endure to be Idle; nay quite confute your own Pretenſions to eaſe, by thoſe laborious and toilſom Vices, which you are fain to call Pleaſures, to render them tolerable, but have certainly no pretence to that Title on any other ſcore, but that they keep you doing.

Virtue is in its own nature active, and an enemy to Idleneſs,

19. And now what more grateful Office can poſſibly be done for men in this Condition, than to ſhew them how they may free themſelves of this load without contracting a worſe; I mean the guilt of thoſe things which like Rehoboam converts Whips

and affords many pleaſing innocent divertiſements.

Whips *into* Scorpions, *yet are now fain to be reſorted to, as the only inſtruments of their relief. And this a Chriſtian* Life *will be ſure to do for you; it will conſtantly provide you with innocent divertiſements, nay much more, it will give you buſineſs, ſo excellent, and worthy the dignity of your Nature, ſo Noble and anſwerable to the Splendor of your Qualities, ſo every way agreeable to the aims of Rational Men, that you will have cauſe to acknowledge with Our Church, that* Gods Service is perfect Freedom.

The particular Duties which are incumbent on Gentlemen are ſuch as ſhew that they have a Calling.

20. *I ſhall not undertake to give you a particular view of all the Severals of thoſe Employments; Thoſe* Precepts *of the Goſpel which aſſign your Tasks, do ſufficiently inform you of the Nature and Excellency of them: My whole Scheme is compriſed in that One, which directs an Attendance on* that *Calling wherein* God *hath placed men, and therefore I am to treat only of thoſe particular* Duties *which are incumbent on you as* Gentlemen, *and therein ſhew you that conſidered* as *ſuch, you have a* Calling, *and ſo free you of that reproach and miſery of being* unprofitable burdens *of the Earth, and then evince to you alſo that* that *Calling is ſo far from implying any thing of real toil or uneaſineſs, that it is only an Art of refining and ſublimating your Pleaſures, rendring them more guſtful and exquiſite, and ſo will (if attended to) make good to you in earneſt your miſtaken pretence to a* Life *of ſenſuality and delight.*

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THE

THE Gentleman's Calling.

SECT. I.

Of Buſineſs and Callings in General.

1. HE that by *ſloth* and improvidence diſſipates and conſumes that *Stock* which is properly his own, falls juſtly under the blunt Cenſure of Folly, and uſually under the ſharper and more ſmarting Penance of Poverty and Want: But he that is but a deputed Manager, if he neglect his *Depoſitum*, is liable to a heavier weight both of Obloquy and Diſcipline. The weakneſs of the one may poſſibly meet with ſomewhat of pity; but the falſeneſs and treachery of the other is the object of an univerſal deteſtation, and is oftentimes very ſeverely ſentenced by thoſe, who, if they would impartially reflect, would find themſelves deeply involved in the ſame guilt.

Folly to waſte our own ſtock; but Treachery to make away that which is entruſted us by another.

2. God has placed *Man* in the World, not as a *Proprietary*, but a *Steward*; he hath put many excellent things into his poſſeſſion, but theſe in truſt to be not only kept, but negotiated with, and by traffick improved to the uſe of the true Owner: Yet herein dealing as a moſt bountiful Maſter, by not only promiſing tranſcendent Rewards in the future to his fidelity, but even annexing at the preſent (as *to the Heifer that treadeth out the Corn*) a moſt liberal ſubſiſtence, interweaving his intereſt ſo with his Duty, that the diſcharge of it is his only means of being happy even in this world.

Man is but a Steward of all that he poſſeſſeth in the World.

3. This certainly is the ſtate of mankind in general; every (*I mean Rational*) perſon having ſomething of this kind intruſted to him. No man that hath underſtanding, be that of a higher or lower ſize, but hath variety of abilities of one ſort or other, and withal that actuating power, which ſhould ſet them on work. And then ſurely he that hath not been excluded from the receits, muſt not pretend an exemption from the diſburſements, the tasks, but is under a ſtrict obligation of improving what he hath thus received, of bringing in fruit to the Granary, as well in order to his own account and joy in the auditing of the harveſt, as alſo to the glory of God from whom alone he derives (and muſt impute) both the ſeed, and irrigation, and the very increaſe. And he that on theſe grounds and according to theſe meaſures decently adminiſters his Province, ſedulouſly attends his duty in this matter, will find himſelf placed in ſuch an active ſtate of buſineſs, that he ſhall have little cauſe to ſuſpect himſelf neglected or forgotten by God and Nature, or placed in the world without a *Calling*.

Every man is intruſted with a Talent of one kind or other.

4. From what is thus indiſpenſably required of *all* men, no one rank or individual of that *ſpecies* can plead an immunity. And therefore till thoſe whom *Birth*, *Education* and *Wealth*, and the common dialect of the world

hath made known by the ſtile of *Gentlemen*, ſhall think fit to expunge the latter part of that title and diſclaim the nature of *men*, as they are willing to do the duty, they muſt certainly retract this error, and acknowledge they have their ſhares in this common obligation.

The bleſſed Angels in Heaven have their ſeveral offices and imployments as miniſtring Spirits.

5. Nay, indeed if they could ſo far imitate the *Prince of the Morning*, as to ſucceed to that rank which he was willing to leave, I mean to aſcend above Humanity and aſſume the nature of Angels, yet even thither would this purſue and overtake them. Among all the Orders of that divine Hierarchy they would not find one Patron or Preſident of Idleneſs. For as the ſpirituality of their eſſence renders them more agile and active, ſo that activity is perpetually exerciſed in employing the divine abilities they have received, to the glory of God the Donor: And that not only in bearing a part in that Celeſtial Quire which inceſſantly ſings his praiſes, but in the more laborious and ſervile offices of being miniſtring ſpirits, yea even to thoſe to whom both in reſpect of nature and innocence they are infinitely ſuperiour. And this they do with perfect alacrity and chearfulneſs, thinking it their greateſt honour and dignity to be thus buſied. Their *regitive Power over the world*, ſaith *Gerſon*, *is not ſo ſuitable an ingredient for a* Magnificat *of their compoſing, as that greater dignity of receiving and performing God's commands:* An evidence how much the meaſures of honour differ between the Courtiers of Heaven and Earth, the Inhabitants of that refined, and this groſs Region. Thus then the proſpect lies before the *Gentleman:* If he chuſe either to look level on the ſame nature with himſelf, or direct his eyes upward on that of the glorious ſpirits that encompaſs Gods Throne, he will not in all the Records of Earth or Heaven find ever a *Patent* for ſloth, any Clauſe of Exemption in this univerſal Law.

The brute Beaſts imploy their ſeveral powers and faculties to the end for which they were Created.

6. Nay, if this *man in honour* would bid farewel to his Birth-right, and become *like the beaſts that periſh*, *Pſal.* 49. 20. if he could be content, in purſuit of this one fanſied priviledge of a *Gentleman*, to renounce all the real ones of a man, and make *Nebuchadnezzar*'s puniſhment his option: Yet neither the Field nor the Foreſt could give him Sanctuary, afford him any number of aſſociates to aid, or but countenance him in his mutiny againſt this divine decree, they would rather be his tutors and monitors to obey it. For what rank even of the moſt *ſavage* animals is there which we can indict of the not employing thoſe faculties they have received? Are they not generally in a perpetual and regular motion to thoſe ends for which they were created, in continual exerciſe of thoſe powers with which they are endued? Yea ſome of them with ſuch improvement to all their neceſſary purpoſes, that it hath raiſed a doubt whether they act by inſtinct or reaſon, by fancy or judgment. *Pythagoras* is diſcernably on their ſide: And *Ariſtotle* that was leſs kind to them, ſeems by one ſaying to have yielded the cauſe, when of *thoſe creatures which*, he ſaith, *want reaſon*, he confeſſeth *that fancy ſupplies its place.* I need not take part in this diſpute; whatſoever their faculties or Talents are, none can doubt of their uſe of them, or whether this their uninterrupted obedience to the Law of their Creation reflects the proportionable glory on their Creator.

Yea, the very ſenſeleſs and inanimate Creatures perform all the Offices of their Nature in an admirable and orderly manner.

7. To deſcend one degree lower yet; The very *inanimate* creatures afford their conſort to this divine harmony; every one of them perform thoſe offices, fail not in the exerciſe of all thoſe (not unactive) qualities God hath put into them. The *Sun* hath received a power of cheriſhing and enlivening terreſtrial bodies, and it folds not up its rays, but communicates

and

and diſpenſeth them freely. The *Earth* has received a power of fructifying, giving ſap and verdure to that which grows upon it, and it withholds not that vital moiſture, but like a tender nurſe ſends it forth liberally to all that expect nouriſhment from her breaſts; and ſo proportionably to all other parts of this great body. And that all this ſerves to illuſtrate the glory of that omnipotent wiſdom which hath placed them in this ſo excellent a ſubordination, is moſt viſible without the help of a perſpective. When the Queen of *Sheba* ſaw the magnificence and regularity of *Solomon*'s Court, ſhe brake out into an admiration of his wiſdom: And ſurely a far greater occaſion is miniſtred to all thoſe who contemplate the admirable order of the Univerſe, with all tranſportation of Soul to magnifie and adore the divine Diſpoſer of it, as we ſee frequently exemplified to us in the ſublime Raptures of the holy *Pſalmiſt*, who never better approves his right to be called *the Sweet Singer of* Iſrael, than on this raviſhing Theme.

8. And now can it be fanſied a priviledge and dignity, to be the one *jarring ſtring* in this great Inſtrument? To diſcompoſe this divine melody, and become the only unprofitable uſeleſs part of the Creation? ſhall thoſe whom God hath made *little lower than the Angels*, ſubdue and debaſe their natures beneath the very loweſt rank of Creatures? and ſhall this (not humble but) ſordid exinanition be lookt upon with reverence, courted as a preferment? This certainly is ſuch an abſurdity, as wants nothing to its confutation, but merely to be conſider'd: And therefore if *Gentlemen* would but ſoberly reflect, there is little doubt but they would reſign at once their claim, and their value of this ſo defaming a piece of honour, ſo abaſing an exaltation.

No great honour for man to debaſe himſelf beneath the very loweſt of the Creation.

9. We can let down our thoughts but one ſtep lower, and that is into the bottomleſs pit; and from thence ſure none will deſire to fetch a precedent; yet if he did, even that black Region could not afford it. For though it muſt be confeſſed, thoſe *accurſed ſpirits* accord not with the former inſtances, in reſpect of the end of their actions, yet they do in the activity it ſelf: Theirs is a buſie ſtate, though to an ill purpoſe: *Satan goes to and fro in the earth*, Job 2. 2. and he *walks about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 12. Yea he employs all his faculties too, makes diligent uſe of all that acuteneſs and dexterity, which either his nature or experience have furniſhed him with, towards that end he purſues. So that it were a wronging, a calumniating even of the very *Devil*, to charge him with idleneſs: Which though it be a ſin which yields him ſuch liberal crops, that he may well ſeek both to plant and cheriſh it in humane nature, yet he cannot offer ſuch violence to his own, as to become an Example of it.

The Devils themſelves are never Idle; but always buſie and active toward mans deſtruction.

10. We may hence make a meaſure, how ſcandalous reproachful a thing this is, which neither *Heaven*, *Earth*, nor *Hell* it ſelf will own, but is like an illegitimate birth, diſclaim'd by all. How unreaſonable, nay how infamous will it then be, for thoſe to take up this expoſed brat, to foſter this vice in their boſoms, who have of all others the greateſt and moſt particular obligation to deteſt it, as having received the moſt of thoſe Talents which engaged them to action? And that ſuch is the *Gentleman*'s *condition*, a ſlight inſpection will ſerve to demonſtrate.

Idleneſs cannot find a Patron throughout the whole Univerſe.

SECT. II.

Of Varieties of Callings.

The more Talents we receiv'd, the greater improvement is expected from us.

1. NOW ſince the univerſal obligation, which is incumbent upon all, and renders it ſtrict duty to have a *Calling*, reſts upon this undeniable ground, *That all men have received from God ſome abilities to actuate*, ſome *Talents* to improve; it follows by all Laws of inference, that thoſe who have received the moſt of theſe, can of all others the leaſt reaſonably pretend to an Exemption, but muſt on the contrary be acknowledged under the conſtraint of the ſtronger and more numerous ties, the general duty which herein lies upon all, extending and ſpreading it ſelf into *ſeveral Branches*, according to the quality and proportion of mens receits.

God hath wiſely aſſigned men to variety of Callings and Imployments.

2. Hence it comes to paſs, that mens *Callings* and employments become ſo various, not only by the free choices of the ſeveral men, but even by the direction and aſſignation of God and Nature, becauſe one man is furniſhed with an ability, which qualifies him for one ſort of calling, another is by his diſtinct propriety markt out for another. And hence alſo it is, that thoſe callings, which are diſtinct in ſeveral perſons, may come to be united in one man, becauſe the ſeveral abilities, which conſtitute thoſe *Callings*, concurring in him, the duties muſt by unavoidable conſequence do ſo alſo. This is in ſome degree obſervable in moſt men, who beſides the *general* powers common to mankind, do receive *ſome peculiar* in order to ſome ſpecial end, and ſo are obliged not only to thoſe Exerciſes which belong indifferently to their whole *ſpecies*, but to thoſe alſo for which they are individually qualified. Thus thoſe whom God hath called to *Chriſtianity*, are by that impowred for thoſe performances which that holy profeſſion exacts, and ſo have the calling of *Chriſtians* ſuperadded to the other, which either natural or civil obligation had laid upon them; ſo that the ſame man may have various callings, in relation to his differing capacities, unleſs as we diſtinguiſh mens Souls into the vegetative, the animal, and the rational, which in ſtricter ſpeaking may be ſaid to be only divers operations of the ſame Soul, ſo in truth what we term ſeveral callings, be but the ſame comprehenſive one, ſtretching it ſelf into the ſeveral faculties of the perſon.

Gentlemen are ſo far from having no Calling, that they have obligations to many.

3. I need not attempt to evince the impropriety of the phraſe, 'twill ſerve my end as well that they paſs for ſeveral, and the application I ſhall make of it, is to ſhew thoſe who are unwilling to hear of any *Calling* at all, that they have obligations indiſpenſable to more than one. They have whatever can belong to them as men, they have alſo what belongs to them as *Chriſtians*; and they have alſo a peculiar addition appertaining to them as *Gentlemen*, that is by interpretation, thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed from the vulgar, not only by empty names and airy titles, but by real donatives, diſtributed to them by God, as ſo many diſtinct advantages, fertile and prolifical abilities, towards the bringing him in his expected harveſt of honour and glory.

The duties that concern us as Men and Chriſtians are generally forgotten and worn out of practice.

4. It is too much to be doubted, many of them may need admonition concerning the *two* former of theſe callings; the duties even of men, much more of Chriſtians being ſo far worn out of practice, that they ſeem to be out of memory too; or if they be at all reflected on, 'tis with the ſame ſcorn that the antiquated habits of our forefathers are, as things fit only to dreſs a man up an object of laughter and deriſion. But this would

would be too vaſt a Theme, and beſides is ſuperſeded by the many pious labours of others. My purpoſe therefore is not to treat at all of them, otherwiſe than they ſhall happen to be linked and interwoven, as in many particulars they are, with the *third*, that of the *Gentleman*.

5. And here they need not fear that I mean to put the Spade or Hammer into their hands, to require them to become either Husbandmen or Mechanicks: My whole deſign is founded in their diſtinction from theſe, namely, in thoſe things, wherein either in kind or degree they excel them. That many ſuch things there are, they will need no Monitor at another time, when the Queſtion is only of the Reverence and Reſpect due from ſuch their inferiours: In ſuch caſes every one can make large Scrolls and Catalogues (*written*, like *Ezekiel's* Roll, *within and without*) of his *Advantages* and *Prerogatives*, and ſtretch them to the exacting the very laſt mite of Tribute they can poſſibly pretend to. But let them remember, that God is as jealous of his Honour, as they can be of their own: And therefore as they make thoſe Pre-eminences, inſtruments of attracting Glory from thoſe below them, ſo they muſt alſo of reverberating and returning it home to that divine Power above them, who beſtowed them to that end, and will not finally be deluded; but if they will diſappoint his primary intention, that of having his *Grace* glorified in their faithful managery of thoſe Talents, they ſhall not be able to defeat his ſecondary, that of having his *Juſtice* magnified in the fatal doom of ſuch *ſlothful ſervants*; if they will envy him the more agreeable ſatisfaction of beſtowing Rewards, they cannot defraud him of that (though inferiour) of executing vengeance.

There are ſeveral peculiar Imployments that belong to Gentlemen as ſuch.

SECT. III.

The Particulars of the Gentleman's Advantages above others.

1. BUT to dwell no longer on Generals, I ſhall deſcend to particularize thoſe *Advantages*, by which they are ſevered and diſcriminated from the vulgar, and which conſequently by being peculiar to them, devolve on them an obligation of a *diſtinct Duty*. And here I ſhall be careful to prevent diſpute, and therefore take in none but what are ſo obvious, as to be univerſally acknowledged; and then having my premiſſes granted, I ſhall hope they will not betray themſelves ſuch ill Logicians, as to reſiſt or diſclaim the Concluſion.

Advantages peculiar to Gentlemen are inſtanc'd in.

2. I begin with that *Advantage* which they are earlieſt poſſeſt of, that of an ingenuous and *refined Education*; of which, I hope, none that hath had it, will ſo far confute the efficacy, as to deſpiſe and undervalue it. What the Apoſtle urges in a higher argument, *Rom.* 9. may be appliable here. Mens minds are naturally of the ſame *Clay*: *Education* is the *Potters* hand and wheel, that forms them into *Veſſels of honour* or *diſhonour*. And though experience ſhews us, it is too poſſible for Men to deface thoſe nobler Impreſſions which they have thus received, yet that makes it not ceaſe to be in it ſelf a moſt eſtimable Bleſſing, any more than that excellency of Gods Image wherein Man was created, could be defaced by his Fall. It is certain, there is no humane means more effectual towards the refining and ſharpning Mens Intellects, giving them an edge and quickneſs; and that the more, becauſe it takes them in that age wherein their faculties are, as their joynts, pliant and tractable, and ſo capable of being by exerciſe improv'd

1. The Advantage of a liberal and ingenuous Education.

prov'd into great degrees both of ſtrength and activity. *This* Advantage the meaner ſort generally want, the expencefulneſs of ſuch a breeding ſets it beyond their reach: The indigence of whoſe condition, doth on the contrary determine their purſuits to that only, which may bring them in a ſubſiſtence, faſtens them to the Shop or Plough, and ſo leaves their minds uncultivated and unapt for thoſe more excellent productions which the happier *Inſtitution of Gentlemen* enables them for; as we ſee it obſerved by the Wiſe man, *Eccluſ.* 38. 25. to the end of that Chapter.

2. *The Advantage of Wealth and Riches.*

3. A ſecond Advantage is that of *Wealth*, which to Gentlemen ſeems to be, as it were rained down from the Clouds, both in reſpect of the plenty and the eaſineſs of its acquiſition. Fair Patrimonies, large Inheritances deſcend on them without one drop of their ſweat, one minutes toil or ſolicitude, as if they were the undoubted Heirs of the *Iſraelites* Bleſſing, Succeſſors in their *Canaan*, who were to *poſſeſs Houſes full of all good things which they filled not, and Wells digged which they digged not, Vineyards and Olive-trees which they planted not*, as it is *Deut.* 6. 11. The Poet hath placed it in the front of his Inventory, the prime ingredient in the completeſt felicity of this life, *Res non parta labore ſed relicta:* Whereas on the other ſide the lower rank of Men fetch their mere neceſſaries out of the Earth, which being as it were, hardned and petrified by *Adam's* ſin, muſt be mollified and ſuppled with their ſweat, before it will become penetrable, will not yield them food, but gives them alſo a portion of ſorrow with it. They muſt firſt be torn with thoſe Thorns and Briars which cover her ſurface, before they can fetch nouriſhment out of her Bowels; they muſt Buy their Bread with their ſweat, as if they had engroſſed the penalty of their firſt Fathers ſin, whilſt *Gentlemen* ſweat only at the engagement of their *ſports*, or by the direction of the *Phyſician*, to digeſt their fulneſs of Bread. Which every one muſt confeſs a ſufficient inequality.

3. *The Advantage of Time and Leiſure.*

4. A third is that of *Time*, This depends by way of conſequence on the former. For God having made ſuch liberal proviſions for them, thus prevented them with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs, they can have no need to employ their time to gain that, wherewith they already abound; and ſo being exempted from that one devouring expence of it, have a great ſtock to beſtow on other more excellent purpoſes: Whereas the poor Man hath ſcarce any vacant minute, or ſuch as he can call his own. They are all foreſtalled by thoſe preſſing neceſſities which lie unremoveable upon him. His day-hours are challenged by his labour, his nights by his reſt; and the ſatisfying of theſe Claims ſo neceſſary, that his own ſupport, perhaps that alſo of a numerous family depends upon it; and therefore he may not attempt to defeat them. So that if *Time* be to be accounted a Treaſure, as undoubtedly it is, here is a ſecond ſort of Poverty to which he is expoſed as a reſult of the former; and another manifeſt inequality between him and the *Gentleman*.

4. *The Advantage of Power and Authority.*

5. A fourth is that of *Authority*, by which I mean not that which belongs to thoſe which are advanced to Publick Office; for that being peculiar to ſome few only, will not bear a diſtinct part in my preſent conſideration: But I underſtand by it that more private influence which *Gentlemen* generally have on thoſe that are their *Dependents*. And this alſo may be reckoned an effect of the former, their Wealth; For in proportion to that, the number of Servants, Tenants, and Penſioners, (yea, perhaps of Friends too) is to be meaſured. And over all theſe they have ſomewhat (though not of abſolute deſpotical dominion, yet) of ſway and prevalency. On the other ſide, the poor Mans authority is bounded within the narrow circuit

circuit of his little Cottage, being in effect no other than the propagation of that Power Nature hath given him over his own body, to thoſe Branches which ſpring from it, his Children; and to that Cien which is ingrafted into it, his Wife. And if he ſhall but peep out of this little Principality, attempt to enlarge his Territories, and preſcribe to any Foreigner, he will ſoon be taught how little his power is acknowledged, and conſequently how great a diſtance he ſtands in this particular alſo from the *Gentleman*.

6. The fifth is that of *Reputation* and *Eſteem*; which as the World goes, is a ſhadow that waits only on the greater Bodies. Wealth and Honour are the things that render any perſon conſiderable amongſt Men, prepare them with an aptneſs to embrace his Dictates, to conſider his Counſels, to tranſcribe his Copies. And though now it often falls out to be an unjuſt meaſure, yet perhaps it may have no unjuſt Original. For if ſuch perſons did make uſe of thoſe advantages they have, to make their Minds as rich as their Fortunes, this were but their due. And therefore if it be paid them upon this ſuppoſition, it is they only that are guilty of the injuſtice, by defeating the ground of it. But by what tenour ſoever they hold it, 'tis ſure, it may be made an apt Inſtrument to many good purpoſes, and therefore well deſerves to be accounted into the number of their advantages. But now if you look on the poor Man, you ſhall ſee him loaded with Contempts, from which no inward excellencies he poſſeſſes can reſcue him. It is the obſervation of the wiſeſt of Men, that *the poor mans wiſdom is deſpiſed, Eccleſ. 9. 16.* So hated and ſcorned a thing is Poverty, that it ſeems the Fate of it is infectious, and caſts reproach upon the moſt eſtimable things that cohabit with it. The world is ſo full of inſtances of this truth, that we need go no higher than our own times. But if we ſhould look back, we may find one as ancient as *Job*, who in his own perſon experimented theſe diſtant effects of Proſperity and Adverſity. While he was in a flouriſhing condition *Men gave ear to him, and waited and kept ſilence at his counſel. After his words, they ſpake not again, and his ſpeech dropped on them, Job 29. 21, 22.* But in the next Chapter we find the Scene quite changed, and this reverenced and adored perſon is become a *ſong and a by-word to the baſeſt of men.* I ſhall readily acknowledge this injurious treating of the poor to be a great Barbariſm. But though there can nothing be inferred from it as *de jure*, yet its being ſo *de facto*, proves all I am about to aſſert, *viz.* The great unevenneſs that is (in this inſtance, as well as the former) between Gentlemen and their Inferiours.

5. The Advantage of Eſteem and Reputation.

7. Having given this Schedule of undeniable *Priviledges* they enjoy, I ſhall, before I proceed farther, beſeech them here to make a ſtand, and ſoberly to conſider whether it be imaginable, that God hath put ſo many excellent inſtruments of Action into their hands, only to make them leſs active? That were to accuſe the Divine Wiſdom of ſuch an unskilful kind of managery, as the ſhalloweſt Humane Providence falls not under. Will any of them be at the care and expence to furniſh a *Servant* with all Materials and Utenſils for work, with no other Deſign, but that he may ſpend his time either in ſleep or riot? If they will not, I ſhall ask how they would like a Servant that ſhould ſo abſurdly pervert their intentions? And according to the anſwer they give to that, leave them to conclude of their own acceptableneſs with their great Maſter; who not only in a ſingle inſtance, but in an habitual courſe behave themſelves as prepoſterouſly. I cannot ſee how ſuch a reflection, if made with any ſeriouſneſs, can miſs of being attended with a ſevere ſelf-condemnation. And then that being ſo proper

All theſe Advantages are beſtowed on Gentlemen to improve, and not to abuſe or miſ-imploy.

proper a *baſis* and ground-work, ſhould methinks by a kind, even of natural energy, invite them to ſuperſtruct on it more Noble and Chriſtian purpoſes; that they who are ſo apt to expect Adoration from others, ſo willing to be Idoliz'd, may not yet any longer be willing to be indeed Idols (*have mouths and ſpeak not*, &c. *Pſal.* 135. as many unactive powers, as thoſe have Organs) but may rather aſpire to ſome degree of reſemblance to that Divine Eſſence, whoſe operations are as Inceſſant as Excellent, and by an unintermitted Induſtry in employing thoſe advantages God hath put into their hands, anſwer this deſign in beſtowing them.

SECT. IV.

The Branches of his Calling founded in the firſt Advantage, that of Education.

That Gentlemen have a Calling, and what it is.

1. I Preſume it is by this time rendred ſufficiently evident, *that a Gentleman hath a Calling*; it is now ſeaſonable to advance, and ſhew *what that is.* And of this the ground hath already been laid in the laſt *Section* by the enumeration of thoſe *peculiar Advantages* he poſſeſſes; which being thoſe Talents committed to his managery, his Calling will be the moſt exactly anatomized and diſtributed into its parts, by unfolding thoſe ſeveral Branches of his Receits, and examining what improvements each of them is capable of, which as ſo many diſtinct Limbs make up the entire Body of his Calling.

2. This I ſhall do, not only in the groſs, but ſeverally, through every one of them, and ſhall take the liberty of doing it with the addition of a double reflection; the one on the *contrary practice*, the other on *the pleaſure* and ſatisfaction that will infallibly attend the diſcharge of *this Duty.*

Education the firſt Advantage peculiar to Gentlemen,

3. I begin with that of their *Education*; the former part whereof commonly commences as timely as the firſt Exerciſes of their Reaſon. It is ſo creditable a thing to have Children put into an early nurture, that there are few Parents ſo careleſs of their own reputation, as to neglect it, but do either by themſelves, or ſome others, to whom they aſſign the charge, put them under ſuch a *Diſcipline* as may break their natural rudeneſs and ſtubbornneſs, mould them into ſome form of Civility, and teach them that firſt Fundamental Leſſon of Obedience, on which all future inſtructions muſt be built. And this is an huge Advantage, not only towards the ſucceeding parts of Education, but toward the regularity of the whole life. For by having their Infant-paſſions thus checked and bridled, they become more tame and governable ever after. The next part of Education, is *Erudition* and inſtruction, and under a Succeſſion of this they are for many years. Scarce any that owns the name of *Gentleman*, but will commit his Son to the care of ſome Tutor, either at home or abroad, who at firſt inſtills thoſe Rudiments, proper to their tenderer years, and as age matures their parts, ſo advances his Lectures, till he have let them in to thoſe ſpacious Fields of Learning, which will afford them both Exerciſe and Delight. This is that *Tree of Knowledge*, upon which there lies no interdict: Which inſtructs not, as that in *Eden* did, by ſad and coſtly experience, but by fair and ſafe intuitions, and may well be looked on as a principal plant in that *Paradiſe* wherein God hath placed this rank of Men.

which qualifies them for many excellent purpoſes:

4. Theſe two parts of Education united, qualifie a Man for many excellent purpoſes. It will be impoſſible to enumerate all, becauſe a mind thus ſubdued and cultivated, muſt yet owe the opportunities of many actions

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ons to outward circumſtances and occaſions, which being various and accidental, can with no certainty be brought into the account. But abſtracting from theſe, there are divers more intrinſick benefits which nothing but a Man's ſelf can fruſtrate; and thoſe alone I ſhall inſiſt on.

5. Firſt, a Man thus Educated is better prepared to reſiſt all Errors that may invade his *Underſtanding*: His diſcerning Faculty is more nimble and agile, can ſuddenly ſurround a Propoſition, and diſcover the infirm and feeble parts; and ſo is not to be impoſed upon by ſuch ſlight Sophiſms, as captivate whole herds of the vulgar. This Advantage, it is apparent he hath, and it is his *duty* to make uſe of it, to examine cautiouſly the grounds of an Opinion, before he give up his aſſent to it, and not to betray his Reaſon, either to his Sloth, by neglecting to give it a competent diſcuſſion; or to his Intereſt, by electing Tenents rather by their profitableneſs than their truth. This certainly is the leaſt that is ſuppoſable to be required of them in this particular, and ſure it is ſo moderate an injunction, as the moſt mutinous humour can have no temptation to quarrel at. For who could think him a ſevere impoſer who having furniſhed a Man with a light to direct him through ſome dark paſſage, ſhould only require him not to blow it out? *The underſtanding is thereby cultivated and improved;*

6. And as he hath this Advantage in reſpect of his *Underſtanding*, ſo hath he, in the ſecond place, in relation to his *Will*: Which though it be a free faculty, and conſequently cannot be forcibly determined to any thing, yet it is capable of perſwaſions and inducements, and is uſually bended and inclined by them. It muſt therefore be a fair ſtep towards the rectifying of the Will, when the Intellect is ſtored with Arguments and Incentives to goodneſs. And this Learning muſt be ſuppoſed to provide for, unleſs we will exclude out of the Scheme, both Morality and Divinity; for each of thoſe will yield variety of ſuch Arguments. *Morality* will preſent Vertue as perfectly amiable in it ſelf, and ſo fit to be embraced for its own ſake: And not only ſo, but alſo as highly profitable and advantageous to us, as being that which gives the ſublimeſt perfection to our Natures, the ſweeteſt reſt and tranquillity to our Minds; and in a word, a full ſatisfaction to all our Rational appetites. *Divinity* confirms all this, and ſuperadds what infinitely tranſcends it, the aſſurance of thoſe eternal and glorious rewards in another World. And theſe ſurely are ſuch tempting *allectives*, as are very proper to attract the Will to chuſe what appears thus excellent, thus deſirable, provided they be juſtly repreſented to it. And the doing that, the preſſing theſe motives home upon the *Will*, and that in refutation of all the contrary deceivable pretenſions of vice, is the firſt part of their obligation. But then there is alſo a ſecond, and that is, that they permit themſelves to be perſwaded by ſuch efficacious arguments, and actually conform their wills to theſe dictates of their underſtanding; that is, that they really and effectively be ſuch men, as their Education directs and requires them to be: Which being the work of their *Wills*, 'twill be abſurd to plead impoſſibility or infirmity, ſince 'tis manifeſt they may if they will; which is ſuch a degree of liberty, as ſerves in all other inſtances to denominate a man a free agent, and ſuch as all puniſhments and rewards both divine and humane are founded on. *which conduceth much to the well inclining and diſpoſing of the Will,*

7. A third advantage is in relation to his *Affections*; which being the inferiour and more brutiſh part of the man, are yet ſo impetuous and aſſuming, that they are very apt to uſurp the dominion over the nobler faculties; and where they gain it, the event is anſwerable to what we ſee in States, where the common people have wreſted the Scepter, all is put into confuſion. *and to the right ordering and governing of the Affections;*

Now that which may prevent theſe civil broils in the Soul, and ſecure the government to the proper Sovereign, may well be reputed an advantage. And to this, nothing merely humane is more conducing than *Education*. For firſt, that early diſcipline which we preſumed, one part of it puts a bridle in the mouths of theſe head-ſtrong paſſions, which by many repeated acts of reſtraint at laſt forget their native ferity, and become more calm and tractable. But then erudition compleats this conqueſt, backs this unruly beaſt, and by a dexterous managery not only reſtrains, but guides him, and makes him ſerve to many uſeful purpoſes, renders theſe mutinous Rebels not only captivated ſlaves, but good Subjects, obedient to the laws of Reaſon. All this Education is of it ſelf aptly diſpoſed to do, if Men will not take the Beaſts part againſt it, encourage him to plunge till he have thrown the Rider. And all that is in this particular required of them, is but to hold faſt thoſe reins that are thus put into their hands, to keep their Affections in ſuch a juſt ſubjection that they may receive, not give laws. Thus we ſee the influence which Education hath on all the eſſential parts of a Man's mind. And were it here ſo immured and cloſed up, that it could make no ſallies at all thence, did the Soul, like *Gideon's fleece*, ingroſs *all this precious dew*; yet whilſt that received ſuch liberal infuſions, it would irrefragably evince this to be no mean inconſiderable advantage. But it is indeed impoſſible it ſhould be ſo confin'd; for if it be permitted to make theſe impreſſions within, as heat in the centre fails not to diffuſe it ſelf to the circumference; ſo certainly will it extend and manifeſt it ſelf in the more viſible effects; all the products and emanations of a mind thus regulated will own their original, bear the image of their Parent.

The benefits whereof appear, 1. In the affability and obligeingneſs of their behaviour,

8. And firſt his *Behaviour* will be affable and civil, not inſolent and imperious; as one that knows Humanity and gentleneſs is a common debt to Mankind, and therefore will not think fit to contract or dam up his civility into ſo narrow a compaſs, that it ſhall ſwell into complement, and mean flattery towards thoſe above, and not ſuffer one drop to deſcend on thoſe beneath him: But diſperſe its ſtreams ſo, that all chanels may be filled with it. 'Tis true, the depth of ſome will require a greater proportion to that filling than others; and there 'tis not to be doubted but he may be more liberal; only in the mean time the ſhallower are not to remain dry. Let the inequality be ſuch as proceeds only from the capacities of the Subjects, not from the partiality of the Agent, and he prevaricates no part of his duty in this matter.

2. In the civility of their ſpeech and language,

9. Secondly, his *Words* will be temperate and decent, the product of judgment, not of rage. For he that hath calmed his paſſions, hath nothing to betray him to raſh, angry, or rude language: This is a foam which is caſt up only by the billows of a turbulent tempeſtuous mind; and can never be the iſſues of a ſerene compoſed temper. To this it is but proportionable, that they be alſo weighty and material. *A wiſe mans words*, ſaith the Son of *Sirach*, *are weighed in the balance*, and therefore he that hath improved his Education to that pitch of proficiency, will ſurely look his diſcourſe be ſuch, as may anſwer that character, which muſt at the leaſt ſuppoſe it to have ſomething of ſolidity, no Man ever attempting to put froth and bubbles into the Scales. And not only ſo; but it muſt alſo preſume it to have ſomething of uſe and value; for, whoever takes pains to weigh what for its uſefulneſs and meanneſs he intends to caſt out as refuſe? And both theſe qualifications are very eſſential parts of a *Gentleman's* dialect, the one oppoſed to light and fooliſh, the other to unſeaſonable diſcourſe.

diſcourſe. For as the one hath nothing of weight (unleſs it be that of a burthen to the hearers) ſo the other can have nothing of uſe, nor conſequently of worth, that being to be meaſured by the aptneſs of it to the perſons to whom it is addreſſed. It ſhould be the endeavour of thoſe whom God hath endued with knowledge, to convey as much of benefit and inſtruction to others as they can: In order whereunto 'tis neceſſary they adapt their ſpeech to the capacities of thoſe they treat with, otherwiſe let them diſcourſe never ſo elaborately, they will rather confound than edifie, and appear to affect more to boaſt, than communicate their knowledge.

10. Laſtly, his *Employments* will be worthy and ingenuous. A Man that hath this *inward* Nobility of Mind ſuperadded to that of his Birth, will abhor to buſie himſelf viciouſly or impertinently; he hath thoſe qualifications, which render him uſeful, and he muſt give himſelf thoſe Exerciſes, whereby he may become the moſt eminently ſo. If by juſt authority he be aſſigned to any publick charge, he is to embrace it chearfully; not as a prize either to Ambition or Covetouſneſs, but as an opportunity of Vertue; a ſphere wherein he may move the moſt vigorouſly in the ſervice of God and his Country. But this happening but to few, it is neceſſary he have ſome other reſerve of action. And ſuch ſurely, he that induſtriouſly deſigns it, cannot want: Wherein though perhaps his influence will not be ſo general as in that, yet it may fall very auſpiciouſly on many. And when all thoſe occaſions are exhauſted too, when all direct operations are at a ſtand, he may yet betake him to the reflex'd, employ his activity upon himſelf, which will always remain a proper object of his Induſtry, he being though a rich, yet ſtill ſuch an improveable ſoil, as will incourage and reward his Husbandry, though never ſo often repeated. And now I ſhall preſume it apparent, That *Education* is a moſt eſtimable Treaſure, a precious *Mine* that contains ſo many rich veins. O, why ſhould any that poſſeſs it, ſuffer themſelves to be poor, meerly for want of diligence in digging out the *Ore?*

3. In the choice of worthy and ſuitable imployments:

11. And would to God that were an impertinent complaint, ſuch as none were concerned in. But they that look on the Manners of many that have had this happy inſtitution, will find too great cauſe to wonder and bewail, that ſo hopeful a Seeds-time ſhould produce ſo ſlender, nay ſo degenerate a Crop: As if *Job*'s curſe were here exemplified, *Job* 31. 40. *Thiſtles to grow inſtead of Wheat, and Cockle inſtead of Barly.* *Plutarch* tells us of a *voice frozen in the midſt of a River*, that became *audible by the thaw*, and applies it to Moral Precepts taught in youth, but actuated by age. The Simile ſpeaks him to have lived in better times: For in theſe, the voice diſſolves with the Ice, leaves not ſo much as an Echo behind it. Men now make it the buſineſs of their riper years, to unravel not the follies, but the learning of their youth: No ſooner are they got from under the Diſcipline of others, but the firſt act of it they exerciſe, is upon thoſe notions which have been inſtilled into them. And here they are ſuch ſevere *Lictors*, that the mildeſt infliction is to gag and bind them, deprive them both of voice and motion. Nor are they ordinarily ſatisfied with this, but as if they feared they would, like impatient Captives, watch ſome advantage to break looſe again, their final doom is *Oſtraciſm*, they and their Lineage; all ſober Counſels derived from them are utterly expulſt, ſo totally raſed out of their minds, that not the leaſt footſteps of them remain. And all this under the name of *Pedantry*, a title, which it is probable their great averſeneſs to their Teachers ſuggeſts to them, as the moſt pathetick reproach; as if they meant now to be revenged on

But Gentlemen now do commonly defeat all theſe good ends of their Edution:

Learning and Tutor together, for attempting to make them wiſe againſt their wills.

12. And now when the root is thus ſtockt up, there is little expectation of Fruit. And therefore he that ſhall here look for thoſe forementioned effects of Education, will be more diſappointed, than *Chriſt* ſeemed *to be by the fig-tree*; that, though *fruitleſs*, yet afforded *leaves*. But here we are not to hope for ſo much, no ſign that ever there was ſuch a plant in the ſoil. Let us briefly review thoſe ſeverals, and ſee what of them is ordinarily to be met with.

For, firſt, They neglect the improvement of their underſtanding, except it be in the principles of ſin and vanity;

13. And firſt for the reſiſting of errors, we uſually find *Gentlemen* no *Heroes* in this point: Their *Underſtandings* are as pliant, as ſeducible, as thoſe who never had their means of fortifying them. And if they do indeed reject Errors, it is commonly by the ſame Engine, wherewith they caſt off Truth, *viz.* their inconſideration of both, as not being able to endure ſo much ſeriouſneſs and intention of mind, as may ſerve to *enter* them of any opinion. They have tranſplanted their diſcerning faculty from their intellect to their *Senſes*, and find it there ſo full, ſo inceſſant imployment, that it can never be at leiſure to revert to Scholaſtick diſquiſitions. They can diſcern exactly the moſt minute error in their garment, hold their Artificer moſt rigidly to the Laws of the *Mode*, are moſt exquiſite Judges in all that relates to vanity or pleaſure, and can they ever think fit to trouble their heads (whoſe leaſt *Lock* muſt not for a world be diſturbed) with abſtruſer ſpeculations, who have found out ſo much a more eaſie exerciſe of their faculties? If any ſhall think this character partakes of the Satyr, I ſhall beſeech him to compare it with the true ſtate of our young *Gallants* in this point, and then upon the ſame account that cold and ſcanty praiſes go for detraction, I ſhall expect this very imperfect and partial accuſation may paſs for a Panegyrick.

whereby their Wills are corrupted into a diſlike of virtue and love of vice;

14. Next for the regulation of their *Wills*, that advantage depends ſo much on the former, that of their Underſtandings, that what evacuates that, muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to do the ſame for this alſo. It is not imaginable that he who hath defaced all his principles, whether moral or divine, or at leaſt never revolves or conſiders them, ſhould receive any influence from them, ſince they operate not but by a diſtinct application. And here ſhould I ask many *Gentlemen*, when they ever ſo much as attempted any thing of this ſort, I fear they would be forced to quarrel at the incivility of the queſtion, to evade the neceſſity of anſwering it. But God knows their actions ſpeak too loud, that their buſineſs is to obey, not to preſcribe; to fulfil, not regulate their *Wills*. Nay indeed 'tis too frequent, that inſtead of conforming their wills to their principles, they model and transform their principles to their wills, herein verifying *Ariſtotle*'s obſervation, *that pleaſures are corruptive of Principles.* And ſo by this one art of inverſion, the face of things is quite changed; Virtue which their Books repreſented to them as lovely and honourable, is now thought to have gained that luſtre only by the flattery and varniſh of the Painters, and ſo is decried as the moſt unamiable, deſpicable creature: And on the other ſide, all the contrary vices are taken from under that black veil, Philoſophers or Divines have put upon them, and are furbiſh'd and trimm'd up, ſet to open view, as the moſt ſplendid, glorious things, the moſt adorning accompliſhments of a *Gentleman.*

and to ſuch a degree as to queſtion either the Holineſs or Being of God.

15. And to ſecure this tranſmutation, even God himſelf muſt have his part in it, be concluded to have been all this while miſ-repreſented in thoſe characters of *Purity* and *Juſtice*, his Word has made of him, and to have laid

laid no ſuch ſevere reſtraints upon Men, as that tells us of. That *Temperance*, *Chaſtity*, *Self-denial*, *Mortification*, &c. were but the creations of ſome melancholy *Recluſes*, who would then enviouſly impoſe thoſe bands upon others, wherewith they had fooliſhly fetter'd themſelves; that God is more indulgent to Mens appetites, which they may ſatiate here, as they pleaſe, without thoſe future dangers Preachers fright them with. That this is the new *Gentile Divinity*, we need not appeal to Mens lives, their words openly proclaiming it, not without much ſcorn and contempt of their eaſie ſimplicity, who govern themſelves by the other. Yet as if this would not ſufficiently provide for impiety, as if they were conſcious of that abſurdity, which indeed there is in defining God an abettor and favourer of vice, many have advanced a ſtep higher, taking a more compendious courſe, and ſince they cannot bring God over to their party, make him ſuch as will ſerve their turn, will unmake him, by becoming flat Atheiſts. Of this there are too too many inſtances, and 'tis to be feared will be many more, whilſt to all other ſenſual allurements that opinion makes to its Proſelytes, this is added, that it is become a *creditable* thing, the badge and ſignature of a modern *Wit*, thus to be one of *David*'s fools, in ſaying *there is no God.*

16. In the next place, let us deſcend to the *Affections*, and ſee what effects of their Education is diſcernable there. And truly that ſeems to be no other, than what is obſervable of a dam, but to intercept the courſe of ſome rapid ſtream, which ſo ſoon as it is either removed or born down, the torrent guſhes with ſo much the greater violence, for having had that oppoſition: So here, when the reſtraints, which bridled their minority, are taken off, their paſſions ſwell to a higher degree of impetuoſity, they ceaſe to be Boys and Men together, the Man is diſmounted, looſes the reins, and is dragg'd whither the fury of the beaſt directs. A ſad change, yet daily too viſible in many: For alas, what is more ordinary than to ſee *Gentlemen*, under the dominion of theſe brutiſh appetites? Sometimes tranſported by a *Rage* to the greateſt Undecencies, nay Dangers; ſometimes hurried by a *Luſt* like the *poſſeſt perſon*, *Mark* 9. 22. through *fire and water*, the moſt deſperate deſtructive attempts, and have nothing but rottenneſs and diſeaſe as the final prize of all thoſe difficult adventures; ſometimes drowned in ſwiniſh *Intemperance*; and ſometimes again intombed in the *Earth*, buried as it were alive by ſordid covetouſneſs, as if they meant to tranſcribe, though not the innocence, yet the *ſufferings* of the *Primitive* Chriſtians, in being torn in pieces by *wild beaſts*. Oh, that they might once be brought to relinquiſh this abſurd fortitude, that thoſe who laugh at the precept *of turning the other cheek*, *Mat.* 5. 39. would not here infinitely over-act it; and give up themſelves to be buffeted, yea ſlaughter'd by theſe their cruelleſt enemies, nor be ſuch *Platonick* lovers of Martyrdom, as to chuſe only this, whereto there is no Crown annexed, but what is worn in the Kingdom of darkneſs.

Their affections hereupon become brutiſh, irregular, and diſorderly;

17. And now ſince we are thus to ſeek of theſe *inward* effects, we can with no reaſon hope for any of thoſe *outward*, which are the reſults and conſequences of theſe. And then 'twill be no wonder to obſerve *Gentlemen* behave themſelves diſdainfully and imperiouſly, as if they could not ſet a juſt value on themſelves, without the unjuſt contempt of others. 'Tis true indeed, this is commonly a wind that blows but one way, down the hill; only upon thoſe below them, upwards they breath gentler gales; it being one of their moſt ſtudied faculties, to perform all acts of the moſt ſupererogating Civility to thoſe above them. But when that Civility is throughly

their behaviour proud and imperious towards their Inferiours, flattering and diſſembling towards their Betters;

throughly ſcanned, it will prove a greater injury than the contrary Rudeneſs; 'tis made up of ſuch hollow profeſſions, ſuch groſs flatteries as are much worſe than reproaches, nay ſeldom fail to be actually ſeconded with them; there being nothing more uſual, than to revile and deride thoſe at a diſtance, whom, when preſent, they admire and adore. And theſe now become ſuch eſſential indiſpenſable parts of good breeding, that the want of either inevitably betrays a man to the title of a ſilly Ruſtick; Flatteries and Deſpiſings being the two contrary elements, whereof he, whom they call a *Fine Gentleman*, is to be compounded.

their diſcourſe vain, frothy and trifling:

18. This gives an account alſo of ſome part of his *Dialect*, which thus far anſwers little to thoſe requiſite qualifications, Weight and Uſefulneſs; there being nothing more trivial or uſeleſs, than theſe two parts of converſation, and 'twere well if no worſe Epithets belonged to them. But if we look alſo into the reſt, they will ordinarily appear to carry proportion with theſe: 'Tis every mans obſervation, that *no ſpring will riſe higher than its firſt head*; and then words being but the iſſues of the Mind, where that wants the ballaſt of ſober and vertuous Notions, 'tis no wonder if the diſcourſe be light and airy. 'Twere eaſie to exemplifie in the ſeveral ſorts of it adapted to the ſeveral humors of men; but 'tis alſo ſo needleſs, that the copy would be too exact by tranſcribing the impertinence too. But what ſuch frothy diſcourſe is naturally, the moſt ſerious may become by accident: And thus we ſee it the infirmity of ſome, who ſo far retain their Education, as to have their minds better repleniſhed to vent their plenty ſo unſeaſonably or affectedly, that it produces nothing of benefit to the hearers, but rebounds injuriouſly with the aſperſion of vanity upon themſelves.

Yea, many times ſcurrilous, filthy and profane;

19. But ſuch is the miſery of this Age, that it were a fair compoſition, if *Gentlemen* could be perſwaded to reduce their *Diſcourſe* only to a privative ſort of Illneſs, 'twere ſomewhat tolerable, if as on the one ſide they did not *miniſter Grace*, *Eph.* 4. 29. ſo on the other they did not breath infection on the hearers. But alas! what are all thoſe profane ſcoffings at Piety, ſo frequent among them, but as ſo many blaſts and malevolent vapours to nip and deſtroy the practice of it? And ſo we ſee it too commonly does among thoſe whoſe greener reflections ſet them not above their malignant influence. How does their immodeſt and obſcene talk diſperſe and ſcatter their own impure fires, to the inflaming of others? And whilſt they inſcribe upon theſe Poiſons the inviting names of Ingenuity and *Eſprit*; they do not only tempt men greedily to imbibe them, but even defame and proſtitute that Wit they pretend to, render it a *Wilderneſs* for all ſavage rudeneſs to range in, and make as many *Candidates* for that reputation, as there are impious and beſtial men in the world. And to this ſort of *Wit* they have found out a very proportionable Rhetorick, I mean that of their *Oaths*, that helliſh piece of Oratory, which ſo overſpreads their language, that (like a profuſe Embroidery that even quite hides the Stuffe) it becomes the moſt remarkable part of it. 'Tis not a little ſtrange how this fouleſt deformity hath gotten to paſs for an embelliſhment and ornament of Stile; but that it doth ſo, is very viſible not only from the no pretence of other temptation to it, but alſo from that affected and ſtudied variety obſervable among them, as if they had the ſame concernment for their Diſcourſe, which they have for themſelves, *viz.* that it may every Year appear in ſome new piece of Dreſs, have ſome Oaths freſh minted to ſet it off.

20. To

20. To all these we may add their vain *Boastings* and assumings, which are often so deplorably ridiculous, that 'tis doubtful whether more pity or contempt belongs to them. Thus oftentimes, he that has but crost the Seas to fetch a Feather and *fantastick Mien*, brags more of his Travels, than if he had pass'd the *Line*, and felt the scorchings of the Torrid Zone. And upon the strength of this he takes authority to impose on others the most absurd and incredible Relations; yet still imposing more perniciously on himself, *i. e.* a belief that he appears very illustrious and glorious in all this, and on that confidence the smiles which his auditors mean in scorn, shall be taken in applause of him, and so encourage those follies they deride. *and attended with ridiculous boasting and ostentation;*

21. Indeed where this vain humour dwells, it will betray it self in innumerable indecencies of speech; but never does it give it self a fuller or worse character, than when it lets loose to anger and rage, one of the most genuine and fruitful branches of this bitter root. And this we frequently see overflow in all the invenomed reproachful language imaginable, such as one would wonder should fall from the mouth of any, whose Education had not been wholly barbarous; an inverted kind of Eloquence, whereto some, who have been taught the rules of better Rhetorick, have a great fluency. *which oftimes breaks forth into rage and reproachful language.*

22. If now we should proceed to take a view of their *Imployments*, there is little doubt but that *Tekel*, *Dan.* 5. 27. might be a proper inscription on them, yea a mild one too, Lightness and Vanity being many times the most innocent ingredient in them. And this is but a natural inference from the former: For since the Principle of Actions as well as Words is within, it will certainly operate alike in both; as Water sent from one Fountain through several pipes, is the same, and hath equal vertues or faults in each. It were too easie to give as particular an account of these as the former; but foreseeing an occasion to do that in another place, I shall transfer it thither, as not desiring to iterate the importunity on so ungrateful a subject.

23. And now he that shall consider, that all this is but the partial Image and representation of those, who have had that Education we so much magnified, will sure be tempted to ask *Judas*'s question, *Ad quid perditio hæc? Why was all this waste* of Discipline and Literature? To what purpose was so costly a foundation laid, when the superstructure is in the Apostles phrase, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12. nothing *but hay and stubble?* And I doubt many defeated Parents have cause to make this complaint: But I fear also divers of them may with justice accuse themselves as Accessories to their own disappointments, who by an over-hasty desire of seeing their Sons men, do at once anticipate and frustrate their hopes, evacuate the benefit of many years Education, by taking them too soon from under its benign influence. Which though it usually spring from immoderate indulgence, is yet really the greatest severity; for what can be more so, than to tie them to all the labour and toil of the Seeds-time, force their Childhood to that study and intention of which that giddy age is most impatient, and then snatch them away at the *Harvest*; suffer them to converse no more with Learning, when once they grow capable of receiving either delight or profit by it? Thus of late it hath been the method of Breeding, to post them with an inconvenient speed from one stage to another, many times bringing them too soon to the University, but much oftner taking them too early from it, before they have near gained what they came thither to furnish themselves with. And from thence the next step is over the *Sea*, which soon washes *Education and Learning is oftimes ill bestowed upon Gentlemen, and this through their Parents fault as well as their own.*

waſhes away thoſe Notions, which lie crude in their brains, but have wanted maturity of years to digeſt into their manners. Indeed 'tis not imaginable how they ſhould retain them, they being at their coming abroad ſolemnly put in a direct courſe of forgetting ſpeedily what they formerly learnt, their whole time being then by order to be taken up in other unſpeculative exerciſes, wherein if they do happen to attain to ſome eminency, yet 'tis ſure but a dry exchange for what they quit for it. But then 'tis not one in twenty that arrives to that: The negligence of Governours, or their own headineſs, when they find the rein thus ſlackned, often makes their progreſs little in any thing they are appointed to; but inſtead of that, they run a full career in all debaucht pleaſures, advance there in an inſtant to the higheſt proficiency. I ſay not this to decry *Travelling* in general, but only the unſeaſonable time that is choſen for it. He that would really improve his Son by that means, ſhould ſend him at ſuch a mature age, when by the help of his foregoing Education his judgment is ſetled and qualified to make uſeful obſervations, his manners well weighed and fixed, that ſo he may be capable of all the good, Foreign Climes can afford, and ſecured from the infection of the ill; like a Loadſtone, attract things of weight only, and not like Jet, draw nothing but chaff and ſtraws. But I confeſs this a digreſſion, and therefore return to thoſe who have thus embezled this precious Advantage, (and who have too much of their own wills in it, to be able to transfer the guilt upon any error of their Parents) beſeeching them ſeriouſly to lay to heart this their ſo ruinous ill husbandry, and to let at laſt ſome better fruits of that ſeed appear; not to ſuffer a piece of *Plate* left to the School or Colledge, to be the only Teſtimonials that ever they were there, and ſo bring thoſe Societies under the reproach of extortion, or fraud, of profeſſing learning but imparting none, of having taken ſomething from them without giving them any valuable conſideration, making them any proportionable returns. But that they would at laſt take up this Talent thus long buried in the napkin, and yet fall a trading with it. And though the time they have loſt ſhould render them deſperate of the reward of the *Ten Cities*, 'tis yet motive enough to induſtry, to reſcue themſelves from the ſentence of the *Slothful Servant*. And yet that will not be all, for there being no middle ſtate between reward and puniſhment, he that delivers himſelf from the one, puts himſelf likewiſe into a certain capacity of the other. But beſides all he is to expect hereafter, he is ſure at the time of a very fair Antepaſt of pleaſure here, which he will immediately reap from it, as the firſt-fruits of the future rich harveſt, which though the Law commanded to be ſacrificed, yet ſuch is the indulgence of the Goſpel, that it exacts nothing, but that men would themſelves enjoy them.

Virtue and Piety conduce to our Temporal as well as Eternal welfare and advantage.

24. For ſuch is the admirable goodneſs of God, that he is generally pleaſed to adapt his commands, not only to our Eternal, but Temporal concernments; for knowing the impatience of our nature, that we love not to depend wholly upon reverſions, he hath been pleaſed to put ſomewhat of preſent guſt and reliſh upon every part of duty. This might be evidenced diſtinctly through the whole Codex of Chriſtian Precepts, his *Yoke is an eaſie*, nay, *gracious Yoke*; his *burden a light burden*, *Mat.* 11. 28. And from this general ground, I may have warrant ſufficient to affirm the like of this particular I am now upon. But it may be yet more clearly evinced, by reflecting on the ſeveral improvements of this Talent, which have been mention'd, as the *Duty* of all thoſe that poſſeſs it.

25. And

25. And first, for that of an acute and *elevated Understanding*, I need appeal no further than to common Vote, to have that pronouced a very desirable thing, it being hard to pick out a man of such an avowed brutality, that will own the despising it. Even those who will be at no pains to acquire, will yet profess to esteem it. And we may believe them in earnest, if from no other argument, yet from this, that every man affects the reputation of being Wise, is pleased when he succeeds in that aim, and on the contrary is not more troubled and discomfited at any thing, than to be taxed of Ignorance or Error. If any shall deny this, I shall suspend his confutation till some body reproach him with folly, and then from the displeasure he finds in himself, leave him to conclude his own value of Wisdom. And indeed why do good men look upon a *fool* with so much pity, and ill men with so much scorn, if knowledge be not both a Felicity and a Credit? Nor is this the sentence only of the vulgar who usually admire those things most, from which they stand at the greatest distance, but especially of the more discerning sort of men, who from every taste they have had of it, have had their appetites so raised, that they have insatiably thirsted after the fuller draughts. This made so many of the old *Philosophers* renounce the enjoyment of those sensual Pleasures, that offered themselves, to go in quest after this one transcendent delight; and *Solomon* to prefer this in his election before Riches and Honour, the two principal parts of worldly splendor, to the rectitude of which choice God himself bears Testimony. And now if this be in it self so valuable, so ravishing a thing, shall its being here connected with duty, prove such an allay, as to deprive it of all the gust? Certainly if it do, it must argue the palate very perverse and distemper'd: For to all other, that one consideration would give a relish and flavour to the driest, the most unpleasant undertaking. The conscience that I am now employed as I ought is such a refreshment as is able to sweeten the severest labour, yea the greatest suffering. Shame is a thing to which humane nature hath an innate abhorrence, yet the Apostles made it *matter of joy when it befell them for Christs sake*, *Acts* 5. 41. And shall this blessed Copy of theirs be transformed in stead of transcrib'd? Shall those who have not so much *Christian patience*, as to bear the slightest reproach for him, have yet so *much unchristian stupidity*, as to endure the greatest in opposition to him? Chuse rather to be ignorant, when 'tis both their sin and shame, than wise, when 'tis their duty and reward? Invert S. *Paul*'s choice, and be fools against Christ, as he owns to be *for him*? If there be any such *Antipodes* in our clime, their unhappiness will yet serve to illustrate what they refuse to partake of, *viz.* the felicity of having performed this part of duty in the improvement of the understanding.

The great advantage of wisdom, or of a good understanding well cultivated and improved.

26. In the next place the *regularity* of the *Will* is extremely both amiable and profitable. For that being an uncontroulable faculty, if it be wrong set, what torrents of mischief and confusion does it let in? If in all its conceptions it permit the sensual appetite to lay, like *Jacob*, its *pilled rods before it*, all its births will be *ring-streaked, speckled and spotted.* The ruinousness of a perverse will is so generally understood, that there is nothing renders a man even in common account more miserable and deplored. He whose Will runs counter to his Reason, every man is *Astrologer* enough to read his *destiny*, and presage his destruction. And by the undecent and pernicious effects of a disordered, we may make an estimate of the beauty and advantage of a rectified Will. The former, like a vicious improvident Governour, exposes his Territories to a deluge, first of luxury, and then

The great happiness of a rectified and well disposed Will.

of ruine: But this latter like a vertuous and prudent Prince, at once ſecures the innocence and felicity of his Subjects. Indeed it is this alone that really and effectively gives us the preeminence above beaſts. They have *choices* as well as we, and they have affections, but wanting the higher principle of *reaſon*, their choices are neceſſarily determined by their affections. Now if we who have both, are guided only by the latter, wherein does our ſtate differ from theirs, ſave only that our liberty makes us guilty, whereas their neceſſity leaves them innocent? I preſume I need ſay no more, to evince the happineſs of a well ordered Will, ſince none can conteſt it, but he muſt tacitly confeſs himſelf weary of his humane nature, and emulous, not of a greater dignity, but of a degradation to that of the Brutes.

The great pleaſure of having our Affections under good government and reſtraint:

27. And as much may be ſaid concerning the *Affections*, which if they be not curbed and held in by the underſtanding, will have as free and uncontrouled a ſway in men, as they have in mere animals, but with worſe effects, by how much we have more objects to incite them, more inſtruments to actuate them than theſe have. If any man can be tempted to think this no unpleaſant condition, let him yet further conſider, that this metamorphoſis is not like the fanſied tranſmigration of the Soul, wherein it was ſuppoſed to aſſume the nature, and conſequently the paſſions but of one beaſt alone: No, here is the whole Wilderneſs let looſe upon a man, with all their contrary appetites perpetually combating one with another. He that hath the rapaciouſneſs of a *Wolf*, may yet have the timorouſneſs of an *Hare*, and ſo is racked between the deſire of having, and the fear of ſuffering. He that hath the luſt of a *Goat*, may yet have the intemperance of a *Swine*, and be diſtracted to which of the appetites to give himſelf. He that hath the cruelty of a *Tygre*, may yet have the wilineſs of the *Fox*, which will give him the pain of many irkſome delays, in attending an advantageous opportunity. And ſo proportionably in others. And what can be more unſupportably uneaſie, than to have theſe continual tumults within, to be in a ſtate of hoſtility, not only with other men, but with himſelf? Or what can there need, beyond this conſideration, to recommend the contrary condition to us? The ſubduing theſe brutiſh Inclinations is the introducing Peace into a Land, haraſs'd and waſted with inteſtine War: And ſure none need be told (at leaſt in this Age) that that is a moſt raviſhing pleaſure. And I may with the ſame confidence appeal to the verdict of any who hath tried theſe two contrary ſtates, and doubt not but he will from his experience confirm the moſt profuſe and even Poetick declamation that can be made on this Theme.

All which advantages make up the greateſt part of Happineſs in Heaven.

28. All I ſhall add is, in a joynt relation to this and the two former, by obſerving that illuminated underſtandings, regulated Wills and affections, make up a great part of the *celeſtial happineſs*. The *Angels* of *light* would no longer have right to that title, without theſe. *The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, were improperly ſo ſtiled, *Heb.* 12. 23. had they not received this accompliſhment of their nature. And the greater degrees hereof we arrive to here, ſo much the more ſenſible anticipation have we of thoſe divine joys. And ſure thus to partake with Angels and Saints, is to be happy, and will be acknowledged ſo by all, whoſe value and wiſhes of a *Mahometan Paradiſe* render them not uncompetent to eſtimate theſe purer and refined pleaſures.

The great advantage of a courteous, friendly and gentle Behaviour.

29. If from hence we proceed to thoſe *outward effects*, which are the reſults of the inward, we ſhall find they are all full of delight and ſatisfaction. Courteſie and friendlineſs of *Behaviour* does not only caſt a glorious

a glorious luſtre round about, attract the eyes and hearts of others, but it alſo reflects with chearful and comfortable gleams upon our ſelves. For, Man being deſigned by God for a ſociable creature, hath ſuch propenſions and inclinations put into him, as are proper to that end; and theſe are gratified and pleaſed when we ſo demean our ſelves, as may anſwer that intention, towards which nothing can be more neceſſary than this Debonair and gentle carriage. For that allures people to our converſation, whereas the contrary roughneſs frights and deters them, (the churliſhneſs of a *Nabal* makes men they *cannot ſpeak to him*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 17.) it gives a man part of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s fate, ſeparates him from among men, by forcing them to withdraw from him; and that the worſt part of it too; the *hairs like Eagles feathers, and the nails like Birds claws*, being much the lighter degree of the infliction, fit to paſs for dreſs and ornament, compared with that more deforming diſguiſe this rugged temper puts upon a man. And as on the one ſide, this moroſity and ſourneſs of humour is very uneaſie; ſo on the other is that form of fawning and flattering compliance, which ſome call Civility: It obliges men in many circumſtances to renounce their eaſe, their health, yea their underſtandings too, and keeps them in ſuch conſtraint, that one may truly ſay, a leſs meaſure of ſelf-denial would ſerve to conſtitute a man a good Chriſtian, than an exact Courtier; whereas he that keeps himſelf in a juſt mean, neither drives away one ſort of company, nor buys the other ſo dear; He has a Standard-meaſure, by which to diſpence his Civilities, *viz.* the quality and worth of the perſons; and confounds not himſelf with thoſe more unjuſt and mutable rules of their expectations. So in the firſt of the inſtances he keeps himſelf a Man, whilſt the other is in ſome reſpect a Beaſt; in the ſecond he preſerves himſelf a Freeman, whilſt the other is a Slave: And ſure I may refer it to any mans deciſion, which is the pleaſanter ſtate.

30. Next for the Words, 'tis not to be doubted but that calm and temperate Language has the advantage of that which is paſſionate and rageful; and that not only in reſpect of decency, but eaſe too; of which there needs no other teſtimony, than that viſible perturbation and uneaſineſs obſervable in all who are under ſuch a tranſportation. So in like manner, when the words are pertinent and weighty, they give not only more ſatisfaction to the hearer, but to the ſpeaker alſo: This may be judged by the contrary diſplacency men have at themſelves, when they are conſcious to have ſpoken impertinently or undecently. By ſatisfaction I mean not that vanity, which men too often affect of ſhewing their parts, but a juſt and ſober complacency, ariſing from the conſcience of having regulated their diſcourſe by the meaſures of a Wiſe man and a Chriſtian, the having ſaid that which may be of benefit, but cannot be of miſchief to his Auditors. And this ſurely is a much more real pleaſure than any can be had in the contrary kind of dialect. If to this it be objected, that generally none are ſo much delighted with their own diſcourſes, as they who talk the moſt vainly and abſurdly: I anſwer that even theſe are not pleaſed with the vanity and abſurdity; their pleaſure reſults from a miſtake, ſuppoſing it to be the quite contrary. And this helps to evince, that ſolid and prudent ſpeaking gives ſatisfaction, ſince even the ſhadow and fiction of it can be made to yield to it.

The Advantage of prudent, ſober and profitable Diſcourſe.

31. Laſtly, for the employments, they ſurely muſt afford moſt of contentment, when they are moſt noble and excellent: They do ſo at the time in the direct line, they having more of agreeableneſs to the nature and dignity of a man; but they do yet more ſo in the reflection, when a man looks

The great ſatisfaction of ſpending our time well, and imploying it in a worthy manner.

looks back upon his day or week ſpent, and finds his buſineſs has been worthy of him, it exhilarates and revives him, enables him to paſs his own approbation on himſelf, and as it were to anticipate the *Euge* he ſhall one day receive from his great Maſter. But he that gives himſelf only the idle advertiſements of a Child, or ſets to the baſer drudgeries of Vice, cannot reflect without confuſion: Which is ſo well underſtood by ſuch perſons, that they are fain to take ſanctuary in a total inconſideration, never daring to ask themſelves, what have I done? Which bears full teſtimony to the excellency and felicity of ingenuous Imployments, ſince they that decline thoſe, are forced alſo to decline themſelves, grow out of their own acquaintance and knowledge.

No reaſonable objections can ly againſt this Duty in any of its branches.

32. And now what objection can there lie againſt this duty, which is in all the parts of it ſo advantageous and eligible, that it becomes duty not only to God, but even to themſelves, their own preſent intereſts and ſatisfaction? Shall pleaſure it ſelf loſe its nature, adopt the properties of its direct contrary, and become irkſome and abhorred, only becauſe 'tis twiſted with Obedience? Is there ſo perfect an Antipathy between God and them, that 'tis impoſſible they ſhould have the ſame objects of delight? Or can no Joys have any taſte with them, that are not the cauſes and forerunners of eternal ſorrows? This were ſuch a degree of perverſeneſs, as common Charity bids me not to expect; and I ſee not what elſe can evacuate the pleaſure that attends the improvement of this Talent of Education.

The want of Education ought to be repair'd by our own particular diligence and induſtry afterward.

33. After all this, I foreſee it not impoſſible that ſome may plead an Exemption from this Obligation, by affirming they want the ground of it, that they never had this Education. I am not willing to fancy there have been ſo many unjuſt and unkind Parents as may qualifie any conſiderable number of *Gentlemen* for this Plea: But to thoſe few that can really make it, I ſhall not think the foregoing Diſcourſe wholly impertinent; for, by ſhewing them the Advantages of what they ſay they thus want, it may incite them (not to murmur at the negligence of their Parents, but) to attempt the repairing of it by becoming their own Guardians, putting themſelves into Diſcipline, and by the ſtrict Laws of Reaſon governing and reſtraining thoſe Paſſions; which by the liberty of their Breeding have got head, by this means ſupplying to themſelves the firſt part of Education: And the like may certainly be done for the latter alſo, if they will but depoſite that common error, of thinking it more manly to be ignorant than to learn, and be content to put themſelves in a courſe of Erudition, which a Man may do for himſelf in his Cloſet, as well as a Tutor may do for his Diſciple in a School; and though he want many of thoſe Advantages the other hath, yet 'tis poſſible they may be in a good degree ſupplied by that induſtry and deſire, which all thoſe are ſuppoſed to have, who are thus their own Pupils; and there want not inſtances of the ſucceſs of them who have thus attempted, but I confeſs there are too few Examples of the Attempt, Men being apt to ſit down contentedly under this want; whereas let the ſame perſons have an entailed Eſtate alienated from them by any Act of their Fathers, they are not then ſo tame, but will ſtruggle to the utmoſt to recover their rights. Yet certainly an Ingenuous Education is as properly the Birth-right of a *Gentleman*, as any the moſt firmly ſetled Inheritance can be: Why ſhould they then acquieſce in that ſo injurious an Alienation, and not ſeek by all endeavours of their own to retrieve this ſo precious a Poſſeſſion?

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of the ſecond Advantage, Wealth.

1. THE ſecond Advantage we are to conſider, is that of Wealth, which that it is a bleſſing will I know readily be aſſented to by all, Mens deſires and earneſt purſuits after it ſufficiently evidencing the general eſteem is had of it. Yet though the Concluſion be right, it is to be doubted many infer it not upon due premiſſes. 'Tis not Riches ſimply conſidered that are the felicity, much leſs thoſe luxuries, to which they are often made to miniſter; but they are like to a fertile ground, which if left without culture, none bears ſo rank Weeds, but if rightly husbanded, yields abundant profit; and thus to manage and improve them is not only the Intereſt, but the Duty of all thoſe to whom God hath committed them; this being the one deſigned Advantage, for which they were intruſted to them. *The ſecond Advantage on the Gentlemans ſide is Wealth and Riches;*

2. Several Improvements there are, of which they are capable; but before I proceed to them, I muſt mention one part of Duty, as fundamental to all the reſt. And that is the well husbanding of them; not in a figurative, but real ſenſe, the having ſuch a provident care of thoſe goods and poſſeſſions, wherewith God hath bleſt a man, as may ſecure them from that Conſumption, to which careleſneſs and ſloth will infallibly betray them. This ſurely is obligatory in many reſpects. Firſt, in Thankfulneſs (I had almoſt ſaid civility) to God, who having diſpenc'd them as a liberality, 'tis ingratitude, yea affront to give them no regard. Secondly, in Juſtice to a Man's poſterity: He that has received a fair Inheritance from his Anceſtors, if he ſuffer his ſupine negligence to cut off the Entail, he defrauds thoſe that were to have ſucceeded him in it, and becomes that *troubler of his own houſe*, to whom *Solomon*, *Prov.* 11. 29. aſſigns no other *Inheritance* but the *Wind*, which is indeed all ſuch a perſon is like to derive upon his Iſſue, the common air being oftentimes their only Patrimony. Thirdly, in order to all thoſe ends to which Wealth was deſigned by God, which depend on this, as Accidents on their Subjects, and ſo are all at once evacuated and nulled by the diſſipating of that wherein they are founded. All which conſiderations do naturally inforce upon Men the neceſſity of a prudent managery. *whereof they ought to be provident, and good husbands,*

3. This being ſuppoſed, and the perſon having, as in our Law-forms is uſual, covenanted to ſtand ſeiſed of the Eſtate, let us now ſee what are the proper uſes, to which it is to be limited. *and reſt contented with their fair portion of worldly Goods.*

In the firſt place, we may rank that of Contentedneſs in his portion; which though to one that is ſet to wreſtle with want it might ſeem a hard precept, yet to him that flows with abundance it might be thought rather a needleſs than difficult injunction, if experience did not teſtifie, that contentment is oftentimes as great a ſtranger in Palaces as Cottages.

4. Of this excellent both vertue and felicity, there are two parts, the one a chearful enjoyment of ſo much of his Wealth, as may decently (I ſay not vainly) ſupport him in that quality wherein he is placed: God does not make Rich Men ſuch meer Conduit-pipes of Wealth, that they muſt paſs all, without retaining any thing themſelves; but rather like the Earth, which though ſhe conveys the ſprings through her veins, yet is allowed to ſuck in ſo much, as may give her a competent refreſhment; and he that does this moderately, and with a thankful reflection on that liberal Providence, *Rich men may chearfully enjoy, ſo they do not abuſe their Wealth;*

Providence, which thus *gives him all things richly to enjoy*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. falsifies no part of his truſt, nor abuſes his ſtewardſhip, this being, as it were, the allowed Fees of his Place, a Penſion allotted him by the bounty of his Lord.

yet ought to ſet bounds to their inordinate and covetous deſire after more, when they have enough already.

5. The other part of contentment is that, by which the deſires are terminated within the bounds of his own poſſeſſions, and not ſuffered to range wildly into other Mens, like *Ahab*'s into *Naboth*'s *Vineyard*, uſing their Wealth, as Anglers do their Fiſh, to bait Hooks for more, by making it an Inſtrument of extorting from others; which is ſo great a guilt, that it nearly concerns them to ſecure themſelves againſt it, by a perfect ſatisfaction in what is properly their own. Nay, even in what is ſaid, there is caution to be had, that there be not too eager and vehement endeavours of multiplying it, and that not only by an unlawful commixture with other Mens, which is the ſin either of oppreſſion or fraud, but even from its own ſtock, for that may be covetouſneſs, and is ſurely a direct oppoſition to the divine diſpenſation. For when God hath given a Man a full fortune, and by that manumitted him from thoſe carkings and ſolicitudes to which needier Perſons are expoſed, for him to make it his grand buſineſs to project how he may add to that heap, or in the Prophets phraſe, *lade himſelf with thick clay*, *Hab.* 2. 6. What is it but the degrading and pulling himſelf from that Sphere wherein God hath placed him, a voluntary ſale of himſelf to the Gallies or Mines? In this reſpect therefore I may not unaptly apply that exhortation which the Apoſtle makes in another, *Gal.* 5. 1. *Stand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free.* Let not him whom God hath by a gracious and peculiar providence exempted from this meaner ſervitude and vaſſalage to the World, relinquiſh that ſo valuable a priviledge, give up his *ear* to be *bored* by *Mammon*, when God proclaims a *Jubilee*. Yet 'tis poſſible the quality of ſome Mens eſtates may be ſuch, that they may be capable of advancement by a moderate and eaſie Induſtry, ſuch as may no way divert them from more excellent Imployments, but may rather be a recreation than a toil: And in that caſe I know no obligation lies on them ſo to deſie an Improvement, as not to chuſe a profitable, before an expenſive divertiſement, to ſpend thoſe vacant hours upon that, which remain by way of overplus from more worthy deſigns and entertainments. But the perpetual ſolicitous purſuit after more wealth, is certainly a culpable inordinacy, as being inconſiſtent with that contentment and acquieſcence which is the duty of every Man for whom God hath thus liberally provided, and ſuch as will beſides be likely to undermine another main part of this obligation.

Charity in relieving the poor and neceſſitous is a duty bound upon Rich men.

6. Such in the next place we are to account the Charitable diſpenſing of his ſtore, to ſupply the indigencies of wanting perſons; which ſurely is to be lookt on as the grand and moſt conſiderable end of his receipts. God, who is the common Friend, as well as Father of all Men, is not to be imagined ſo partial, as to provide pomps and luxuries for ſome, and in the mean time leave others deſtitute of the neceſſary ſupports of life; yet if we look no deeper than the viſible portions of Poor and Rich, there is no evidence of the contrary. But when we examine upon what Conditions and Proviſo's that Abundance is conveyed, we ſhall have no temptation ſo to aſperſe or *charge God fooliſhly*: For though we have not diſpenſed ſo immediately to the Poor, yet he gives them as it were, Bills of Aſſignment upon the plenty of the Rich, a right to be ſupplied by them: So that the difference ſeems to be only that of an Elder, and Younger brethren; the Elder uſually carries the bulk of the Eſtate, but then that is charged with

proviſions

proviſions for the Younger; and if the quantity of thoſe be not diſtinctly expreſt, but left indefinitely, that act of Truſt in the Father lays the greater obligation on him, not to deceive it by too mean and ſcanty a diſtribution; for now himſelf is become a Father to them, and therefore ſhould proportion his bounty by the tenderneſs and bowels of that moſt affectionate relation. And this may not improperly be deemed one reaſon, why among ſuch multitudes of commands of Charity in the Goſpel, there is yet none that expreſly allots the proportion of our Alms, that by this act of confidence, as it were, Men might be obliged to the higher liberality: And he that ſhall make this Incentive to it, a pretence to excuſe the want of it, is ſure a moſt criminous perverter of the divine intention, treacherouſly countermining God's ſacred arts, as if 'twere not enough to rebel, unleſs in a further contempt he aſſaulted him with his own weapons. Certainly God never deſigned *Lazarus*'s portion ſhould be made up only of the *Crumbs from the Table:* For though indeed *Dives* is taxed that he gave not them, yet if he had, ſuch a dole would ſure never have reſcued him from the place of torment. He who reſts in a Rich Man's boſom in Heaven, is to have ſome proportionable treatment from thoſe on Earth, ſome more hoſpitable reception than a lying at the Gate, ſome better Chirurgeons than Dogs to cure his Sores; and thoſe that refuſe it him, muſt be preſumed to contemn not only the *Lazarus*, but the *Abraham*, yea the Heaven too that receives him, ſince that which qualifies him for an admittance there, is not able to recommend him to their leaſt regard.

The meaſure and proportion of our charity is not mentioned in Scripture.

7. I ſhall not attempt to proportion Mens Charities, ſince God hath not; yet there are ſome general meaſures to be made to bound them on the ſinking ſide, that they fall not to too ſcandalous a lowneſs; which having been done already by a * better Pen, I ſhall refer the Reader thither. But thoſe yet leave Mens Compaſſions full ſcope to grow up to what greater height Gods grace and Mens exigencies ſhall advance them: And ſurely the latter may ſometimes be ſuch, that it will become every Rich Man not only to rifle his Coffers, pour out whatſoever his ſuperfluities have there amaſſed, but alſo to defalk much of his own accuſtomed enjoyments, cauſe the Raſor to paſs even upon his whole Equipage, to cut off all Excreſcencies, all exuberant Expences, that ſo the ſtream may run the fuller in that one chanel which God's providence thus cuts out for it. Whether this may not be a proper ſeaſon for it, I leave every conſidering perſon to judge. At the preſent I ſhall beſeech every Man to whom God hath given Wealth, ſadly to ponder how ſcandalous a thing it will be for him who has been the Object of ſo great Bounty, to decline the being an Agent in any; to diſcover himſelf to have ſuckt in nothing of the virtue, amidſt ſuch an influence of the commodities; and to defie the Example of that Liberality, by whoſe effects he lives. But withal let him conſider the danger of it alſo, how dreadful a guilt (and conſequently vengeance) he draws upon himſelf, if he ſhall defeat this ſo main end of his receipts. It is indeed a complication of many crimes not only againſt Man but God alſo: I ſhall inſtance only in two, moſt generally decried, and yet moſt eminently contained in it, Unthankfulneſs, and Falſeneſs.

* *Dr.* Hammond's *Practical Catechiſm.*

Uncharitableneſs is a ſin of great Ingratitude and Perfidiouſneſs.

8. God in his wiſdom diſcerning that Equality of Conditions would breed confuſion in the World, has ordered ſeveral ſtates, deſign'd ſome to Poverty, others to Riches, only annexing to the Rich the care of the Poor; yet that rather as an advantage, than a burden, a ſeed of more wealth both temporal and eternal. Now in this diviſion of Men, thoſe on whom he hath cauſed the better lot to fall, can owe it to nothing but his gracious diſpoſal;

diſpoſal; and therefore had been certainly obliged to ſubmit to any the moſt difficult tasks he ſhould have diſpenſed to them. But now that in his great indulgence he has ſo tempered the command, as to render it not an allay, but an enhancement of the mercy, he that gives it only a bare taſtleſs compliance, betrays himſelf to want a juſt ſenſe of it; but he that flatly reſiſts it, is in the moſt tranſcendent degree barbarouſly ingrate. Nay, I think I might have laid the charge higher, and called it malice; for what beneath that can provoke a Man thus to reſiſt his duty and intereſt together?

9. Nor is this all, 'tis alſo the greateſt Perfidiouſneſs: Every rich Man is, as I ſaid before, God's Steward, and particularly intruſted to provide for the indigent parts of his Family, ſuch are the poor and needy. Now if he leave them deſtitute, and ſuffer either his riot or covetouſneſs to feed upon their Portions, what more deteſtable falſeneſs can be committed, not only in reſpect of them, whoſe right he thus invades, but of God alſo, whoſe truſt he abuſes? Many other enormities there are in Uncharitableneſs, which as ſo many miſ-ſhapen limbs concur to the making up this deformed Monſter; but I ſhall ſuppoſe it ſufficient to have pointed out theſe two, which being the moſt profeſtly contrary to ingenuity, I muſt hope will carry a very averting appearance to thoſe who ſo eſpecially pretend to that quality.

Rich men ought not to make their Wealth the occaſion either of pride or confidence;

10. To this poſitive part of duty, the being *rich in good works*, we find the Apoſtle connects a negative, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Charge them that be rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches.* And we need not reſort to implicit faith in the Author, to perſwade us of the great propriety and fitneſs of theſe cautions; 'tis too evident that Pride and Confidence are diſeaſes that uſually breed in full and opulent fortunes, and as they ſpring from the ſame root, ſo do they, like neighbouring branches, mutually ſhelter and ſupport one another. He that is high minded, abhors the ſubmiſſion of any foreign dependence, and therefore gladly anchors on any thing he can call his own; and thinking his Wealth moſt properly ſo, he has as great an aptneſs, as holy *Job* expreſſes an averſion, to *make gold his hope, and to ſay to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence, Job* 31. 24. On the other ſide he that truſts in his Wealth, is by that fortified in his pride. It is *Ariſtotle's* obſervation, that *wealth makes contumelious* and inſolent; which I preſume he infers not only from experience, but reaſon alſo; for the ground-work of humility being the ſenſe of impotence and defect, he that aſſumes a ſelf-ſufficiency, undermines that foundation, and inſtead of it lays the *Baſis* of the quite contrary temper, all haughtineſs and elation of mind. A memorable example of this we have in the inſolent reflections of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 4. 30. which had withal ſo diſmal a conſequent, as, methink, ſhould like *Lot's wife*, remain a perpetual Monument to deter others from all approaches towards the like vanity.

becauſe they have nothing but what they receiv'd from the free Grace and Bounty of God,

11. And certainly it is a moſt important concernment of rich Men, to fence themſelves againſt this double temptation; to which purpoſe they can hardly find a more complete armour, than what they may borrow from one ſhort ſentence of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?* Let them look on themſelves as meer Receivers, and then with what pretence can they pride themſelves in that wherein they are barely paſſive? Nay indeed if it be throughly ſcann'd, theſe Receits imply cauſe rather of ſhame than boaſting; the being filled from anothers hand, is a ſure Argument (and tacite Reproach) of a natural and original emptineſs;

tineſs; and if God have dealt ſo liberally with them, they may collect 'tis in compliance not with their merits, but infirmities; his having made them rich is a ſtrong preſumption, he ſaw them not prepared to be innocently poor: And ſure Pride muſt be a ſubtle Alchymiſt, that can hence extract matter of vanity, and might with equal Logick have perſwaded the *Jews* to glory in thoſe Indulgencies, which were granted them only for the *hardneſs of their hearts.*

which may be withdrawn and taken from us at his pleaſure.

12. In like manner if they reflect on their *riches* as received, it renders them alſo a moſt unfit object of *Truſt.* For if they were given, they may alſo be taken away. We hold all by that old *tenure*, which the Lawyers ſtile *Alodium*, becauſe it is from none but God: and his gifts (of this kind at leaſt) are never ſo abſolute, as to exclude power of revocation. He then that enjoys a thing not upon right but bounty, muſt ask his benefactor how far he is to preſume on it. And if they would do ſo in this caſe, they would ſoon be reſolved how little confidence were to be repoſed in wealth. They may hear *God* the great Patron tell them by *Solomon*, that *riches make themſelves wings, and fly away as an Eagle*, *Prov.* 23. 5. by *Chriſt*, that the *Treaſures* which they lay up here are liable to the *Moth, and Ruſt, and Thieves*; and by the *Apoſtle*, that they are *uncertain riches.* Nay indeed, if they would but ask themſelves, their own daily experience and obſervation, that would bear the ſame teſtimony. Every day almoſt gives ſome renewed inſtance of it. What multitudes of accidents are there to which Mens goods are liable? A rough Wind, a tempeſtuous Sea ſinks at once the Merchant and his Ship; an ill ſeaſon, an hungry ſoil eats out the Husbandman: And they who run not either of theſe hazards, thoſe whom neither the water nor the earth ſwallow up, a Fire may yet conſume. And can there any ſecurity be fanſied in that wealth, which is thus a prey to each element ſingle, and yet more often to them united in Man; to whoſe frauds or violences more have owed their impoveriſhing, than to any of the former accidents? And now what greater infatuation can there be, than to place a truſt on that which is ſo flitting and unſteady, to lean on a broken reed, or in *Solomon*'s phraſe, *to ſet ones eyes upon that which is not?*

The uſeleſneſs and inſufficiency of Riches in many caſes of neceſſity.

13. But if by an impoſſible ſuppoſition, we ſhould imagine Riches to be as permanent, as they are indeed tranſitory: Yet unleſs they had as well *Strength* as conſtancy, they could with no reaſon be depended on. He that ſtays by his friend to the laſt minute, if he have no power to aſſiſt him, is only a ſpectator, not a reliever of his ſufferings. And alas, how many miſeries are Men ſubject to, in which wealth can give them no aid! Is a Man afflicted in his body with pain? The *Indies* are not a competent price for a minutes eaſe, an hours ſleep. Is he perſecuted in his Name with reproach? 'Tis not whole *Ingots* of gold that will ſtop the mouth of Fame: Nay oftentimes the obloquy is it ſelf meerly the progeny of his wealth, that breeding envy, and envy detraction. But if the ſore lye yet deeper, if it be the *Soul* that ſuffers, that is yet farther removed from poſſibility of relief this way. If it ſuffer as a ſlave under the dominion of ſin, no treaſure can redeem from that vaſſalage. Wealth does indeed too often by adminiſtring temptation ſtrengthen thoſe chains, but it cannot break them, as appears too evidently by the number of ſuch rich bondmen. If it groan under the guilt of ſin, labour under the terrors of an accuſing Conſcience, alas! gold is no balm to a wounded ſpirit: The luxuries which that has ſupported may help to pierce, but it has no power to heal. Or laſtly, if the Soul fall finally under the puniſhment of ſin, there is no commuting that penance, buying off that ſmart; Riches abuſed may indeed

ſwell the attempt, and multiply the ſtripes, but they can never bribe the remiſſion of any. The Wiſe-man hath aſſured us this, *Prov.* 11. 4. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath.* Nor does this carry any oppoſition to the counſel of our Saviour, *Luke* 16. 9. of *making friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs:* For he refers not there to any natural or inherent property of riches, but only to that extrinſick and accidental advantage may be made of them proportionably to what was ſaid before of the *unjuſt Steward*, whoſe dexterous managery was it that rendred his Lords debts ſo uſeful to him; not that they had any proper innate vertue to ſecure him from the neceſſity either of begging or digging. And therefore we ſee Chriſts words run not in an Annunciative, but an Exhortatory ſtile: He tells us not that *Mammon* ſhall make us friends, but excites us to make that our own care, and by a prudent diſpoſure to make it ſubſervient to an end above its native efficacy. But all this is ſure very reconcileable with that natural impotency we have obſerved in it. Wealth charitably diſpoſed may have excellent effects, but yet thoſe are to be aſcribed to the charity, not the wealth, which ſtill remains in its own eſſence the ſame unactive lump in the Cheſt that it was in the Mine, like the heathen Deities, unable to protect its moſt zealous Idolaters. As a further inſtance whereof I may add that which will ſound very like a riddle, that riches cannot deliver even from preſent Want: Which yet is demonſtrably true in all thoſe rich Miſers, whoſe bellies are lank, while their coffers are full; a ſort of Tantalized creatures, not peculiar only to this latter age, for we find them deſcribed by *Solomon*, *Eccleſiaſt.* 6. 2. *A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, ſo that he wanteth nothing for his ſoul of all that he deſireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof.* So unſignificant a thing is wealth, that without the addition of a new power, it enables him not to receive the leaſt benefit from it.

14. When all this is conſidered, what is there in wealth that can invite the leaſt confidence, ſince it appears ſo utterly unable to ſecure men in their moſt important intereſts, nay to do that which it moſt immediately and moſt colourably pretends to, the keeping them from want? And therefore he that will not run himſelf upon that ſad defeat of being diſappointed in his truſts, failed in his greateſt exigents, muſt look out for ſome firmer ground whereon to build. But alas! our ſoil affords it not, all here below was long ſince pronounced by one that wanted neither wiſdom nor experience, to be Vanity. Such mutations and viciſſitudes attend all ſublunary things, that he that attempts to erect any durable ſatisfaction on them, out-does the folly of that abſurd architect Chriſt mentions, and builds not on the *ſand*, but *water:* And in this ſence the world is ſtill under a deluge, not ſo much dry ground, as where a dove may reſt her foot.

Our chief Help and Truſt, notwithſtanding all our Riches, ought to be in God the giver of them all.

15. We are then driven by way of neceſſary refuge, to that which ſhould be our voluntary choice, to come home to the *Ark* to ſhelter our ſelves under his wings, where alone we may ſecurely reſt, and according to the advice which the Apoſtle ſubjoyns to theſe cautions, to *truſt in the living God.* And to do this amidſt all the ſeducements of Wealth, to ſee through all thoſe miſts which the fumes of Plenty raiſe, and whilſt they enjoy the gift, to confide only in the Giver, is indiſpenſably the duty, and ſhould be the care of every one, to whom S. *Paul* directs this charge, *All that are rich in this world.*

Rich men ought not to abuſe their Wealth to Intemperance and Exceſs.

16. And ſuch in the laſt place are to take notice of another branch of their obligation, and that is to uſe that advantage which their Wealth gives them

them towards the exerciſe of *Temperance*: Which indeed can never be known to be truly ſuch, but when there are opportunities and temptations to the contrary. He that hath nothing wherewith to maintain a Riot, leaves it doubtful both to others and himſelf, whether his Abſtinences be the effects of Poverty or Temper; but he that has all the fuel for Luxury, and yet permits it not to kindle, he approves his Sobriety to be indeed his Choice, not his fate. And this is a moſt excellent priviledge of Wealth: And though 'tis to be doubted it ſcarce finds room in moſt of our Catalogues, yet certainly it merits a principal place, as being much the greateſt of all thoſe, which reflect only upon the perſon himſelf. This reſiſting of Temptations is truly that Heroick courage worthy of thoſe that pretend to Honour, fit to denominate a *Gallant man*. I wiſh thoſe who ſeek that reputation by many raſh and unwarrantable Adventures, would here entertain their youthful Ardours, this being a Field where they may be aſſured never to want Combatants. One while *Gluttony* preſents its ſelf, armed with the allurements of a full and delicate Table: And though one would think him but a deſpicable Aſſailant, that has only the Kitchin for his armory, yet experience ſhews us, thoſe edgeleſs weapons may vie with the keeneſt for the mortalneſs of their effects. At another time *Drunkenneſs* ſends a Challenge by delicious Liquor, cheerful and diverting Company; and that not without menace of infamy to him, who ſhall own ſo much religious cowardiſe, as to fear to hazard his Sobriety in the encounter. Sometimes again *Luſt* attaches him with the piercing darts, the killing glances of a proſtitute Beauty. In the mean time *Pride*, the moſt ſlie and treacherous of all the reſt, is perpetually laying ambuſhes for him in the adorations of his Flatterers, the vanity of his Attire, and innumerable kinds of Exceſſes. And now what *Knight-Errand* would wiſh for more Encounters? Or why ſhould men range abroad to invite Quarrels, whileſt they tamely ſuffer ſuch troops of enemies to bid them daily defiance? 'Tis, they ſay, a *Maxime* among the *Swordmen*, That *he that has once been baffled, is ever after an incompetent Challenger*. I wiſh it might have this one ſober application, that men would ſuſpend all other *Duels*, till they have righted themſelves on their Vices, and by ſome ſignal Conqueſts redeemed themſelves from that obloquy and defamation, which theſe mean, yet inſulting, Adverſaries have expoſed them to.

17. Having ſhewed what Uſes are duly to be made of *Wealth*, let us now look back, and conſider whether any of them be ordinarily diſcernable in *Practice*. And here we ſhall meet with one ſort of men, who ſtumble at the very threſhold, that fail in that firſt part of duty, on which all the reſt depend: I mean thoſe who by a ſupine negligence ſuffer their *Eſtates* to moulder and conſume inſenſibly, for want of an eaſie inſpection and overſight. Of ſuch as theſe, former Ages have afforded inſtances, and doubtleſs the preſent alſo, though the number of the luxurious waſters do now ſo overwhelm them, that they are the leſs diſcernable. And though this ſeem to be the effect only of ſloth, yet certainly there are other concurrents to it, generally theſe two: Firſt ſuch an overweening of their wealth, that they think it inexhauſtible; and ſecondly an opinion that it is a mean and peaſantly thing for a *Gentleman* to give himſelf the trouble of looking after his fortune. The motives are too ridiculous to deſerve a confutation; but in the mean time it cannot but extort pity, to ſee *Families* ruined by ſuch vain whimſies. And what tolerable account can ſuch a Parent give to his beggar'd Off-ſpring, to whom 'tis very likely he may propagate the pride and ſloth which made the mere managery of an

Many men to be blamed for neglecting the improvement of their Eſtates;

Eſtate too hard for him, and yet withal bequeaths them the ſadder toil of getting one? Nay, what account can he give to God, from whom he received it, in order to ſeveral ends, if he thus at once defeat them all? 'Twas a Command to the *Jews*, that they *ſhould not cut down Fruit-trees*, though it were for ſo neceſſary an uſe as to *advance a Siege*, *Deut.* 20. 19. But this is the hewing down that Stock, from which ſo much good Fruit ſhould ſpring, and that without any pretence either of neceſſity or reaſon.

and for not being contented with their own, and invading that of their neighbors;

18. Our next view will preſent us with *another* ſort of *perſon*, who as much tranſgreſſes the duty of contentedneſs in both the parts of it. 'Tis no prodigy to ſee men, whom God hath afforded the portion of the rich, ſcarce to allow themſelves that of the poor; ſo letting their *eye be evil* even to themſelves, *becauſe God is good.* The *Egyptians* were ſuch jealous Reverers of thoſe Creatures which they worſhipp'd, that he that violated them was in *danger of ſtoning*, *Exod.* 8. 26. So theſe men who have ſet up their Wealth for their God, pay it ſo much veneration, that as they are impatient to have it invaded by others, ſo they are afraid to offer the leaſt violence to it themſelves. They have inſhrined it to receive their adorations, and it is now become Sacriledge (indeed the only one they ſcruple) to debaſe it to the ſupply of their neceſſities. They are ſtrange auſterities which the *Votaries* of this Deity will endure, even beyond the mortifications of the moſt rigid *Aſcetick*. Their whole lives are a perpetual contradiction to all the appetites of Nature; yet alas! that infers here no compliance with thoſe of Grace, but as if they meant to ſet up a *Third* party in the world, they equally oppoſe theſe. And now he that thus oppreſſes himſelf, no wonder if he do the like to others, if he extort the utmoſt that either power or fraud can wring from any. And that this work may not be retarded, he is provided of variety of inſtruments for it. Sometimes Bribery muſt give him a legal colour to rob his neighbour. Or if a Witneſs prove a better *penny-worth* than the Judge, Subornation ſhall do the buſineſs. Sometimes Extortion ſhall prey upon a needy Creditor, and that not only with the ſlower gnawings of a Canker, but with the more ravenous devourings of the Vulture. Sometimes the Rack is brought out, and a poor Tenant faſtned on it, and there ſo ſtrained and diſtorted, that he can never knit again to any competent ſubſiſtence. Sometimes again a poor neighbouring Prodigal ſhall be ſpurred on to farther riot, fed with money, that ſo by a forfeited *Mortgage* he may ſeize on his Eſtate. In a word, 'twere endleſs to reckon up all the engines of rapine which this greedy Invader hath in his magazine. And of ſuch a one I preſume every man will pronounce, that he notoriouſly violates the precept of Contentedneſs.

and coveting more than they have real occaſion for;

19. But though this be the groſſeſt, yet is he not the only Tranſgreſſor. There is alſo *another* more plauſible ſort, who though they do not thus ſeek to encreaſe their wealth at other mens coſts, yet do it too much at their own: Whoſe brains are mere forges of Projects, perpetually hammering out ſome new Contrivance for gain, that continually travel in birth of ſome freſh Improvement, ſuffer all the pangs and throws of a carking ſolicitude in purſuit of it. I know this piece of *Covetouſneſs* hath better luck than the reſt, and paſſes for a creditable thing, under the ſpecious name of good husbandry; but ſure if it be throughly penetrated, it will appear no leſs oppoſite to Contentment than the former. Nor can that guilt be invaded by thoſe that ſay, they ſeek to advance their Fortunes, not out of the Miſers deſign of hoarding up, but out of the more generous purpoſe of living more ſplendidly. For ſure he that covets more

to

to ſpend, is as little contented in his portion, as he that covets more to lay up: He that thinks his Table too ſcanty, his equipage too low, is as far from being ſatisfied, as he that thinks his land too little, his bag too empty. So that 'tis apparent theſe arrows come out of the ſame quiver, though they be ſhot at ſeveral marks.

whereby Charity and Almsgiving is greatly neglected and diſabled.

20. And between both theſe motives of griping no wonder if the *Duty of Alms-giving* be crouded into a very narrow compaſs. That excellent vertue of Charity has indeed much of the image and impreſs of *Chriſt* upon it: But the World has given it a further kind of conformity with him than he ever deſign'd, its crucifixion between Covetouſneſs and Luxury, being the counterpart of his *hanging between the Thieves.* There wants only one member of the parallel, the *breaking the legs* of theſe *Malefactors*, which God knows our *Souldiers*, nay many Armies of them have not been able to do. The many inſtances theſe times have given of the ſudden diſſipation of mens Idolized heaps, have not yet ſo diſciplin'd the Worldling, as to perſwade him to *lay up his treaſure in Heaven.* And the loud calls of God to weeping and *mourning and girding with ſackcloth*, have moſt prepoſterouſly been Echoed back with the louder noiſe of mens revellings, and wild jollities. And then they who thus deſpiſe the judgment of God, are very unlikely to compaſſionate the miſeries of men, and I doubt there are many who thus anſwer the character of the unjuſt *Judge*, *Luke* 18. *that neither fear God nor regard man*, nay that far outgo him in inexorableneſs of temper. He was to be wrought upon by *importunity*; but ſo petrified are theſe mens bowels, that no prayers nor tears can diſſolve them. 'Tis a much eaſier task to dig Metal out of its native Mine, than to fetch it out of the covetous mans Coffer. The Earth, though ſhe hide, yet ſhe guards not her treaſure, 'tis acceſſible to the induſtry of any that will ſearch for it: But he like an *Argus* ſtands Centinel about his, and ſounds an alarm upon the remoteſt appearance of a poor ſuppliant. With what jealouſie does he eye any that he can but fanſie to come upon that ungrateful errand, and then how many arts has he to prevent the aſſault? Or if by ſome extraordinary Charm all his eyes have ſo ſlept at once, that he happen to be ſurpriſed, yet he has ſo many weapons of defence, that the aſſailant ſhall gain little by it, but the ſhame of an open repulſe, being ſure to find him impregnable. As for the *Voluptuary*, he has ſo many expenſive luſts to maintain, that he has difficulty enough how to gratifie all them in the diſtribution of his wealth: They are competitors to each other, yet joyn to keep out that which would be a common one to them all. He that grudges not the wildeſt profuſions of his wealth, yet thinks an Alms will undo him. 'Tis the grand buſineſs of his life to contrive ways of expence: Yet when any object of charity preſents one, he becomes thrifty on the ſudden, like the *Senſitive plant* ſhrinks at that touch, and that open hand of his clutches as faſt, as if ſome convulſion had contracted it. Thus totally have men forgot upon what terms their wealth was given them, and thereby like miſerable Chymiſts, extract Poiſon out of Cordials, a Curſe out of a Bleſſing. Riches were deſigned by God to be ſubſervient to that Compaſſion which he has implanted in humane nature: But now they are become the means of ſuppreſſing and eradicating it. Rich men look upon poor, as if they were creatures of another *ſpecies*, things wherein they were perfectly unconcerned. 'Tis *Strada*'s fancy, that there is ſuch a *ſympathy raiſed between two Needles touched by the ſame Loadſtone, that perſons at the greateſt diſtance may by the conſent of their motion maintain a correſpondency.* I ſhall not undertake for the truth of the Experiment, but however me-

thinks

thinks 'tis matter of reproach to us, that theſe inanimate creatures ſhould have ſo much obſervable accord, as to give pretence for ſuch a conjecture, whilſt men who have ſo many undoubted principles of union both from nature and grace, have quite extinguiſhed all effects of them. That too many have ſo, there needs no other evidence than the many unſuccour'd extremities of the Poor. For how elſe can it become poſſible, that one rank of men ſhould gluttonize, and another ſtarve? That he that thinks it death to endure either the want or moderation of a Meal, ſhould never conſider what are the gripings of the ſtill empty ſtomach? That he ſhould without all regret ſee his own humane nature pining and languiſhing in the perſon of his poor brother, whilſt in himſelf 'tis oppreſt with the quite contrary exceſſes, and might be relieved in both by a more equal diſtribution?

The great ſin of uncharitableneſs in thoſe that have wherewithal to do with, and yet will not.

21. And now who can ſufficiently deplore the wants of the Poor, ſhall I ſay, or rather the inhumanity of the Rich! This ſurely is the ſadder ſpectacle of the two: The one only ſuffers, the other ſins. And that ſuffering too may end in eternal refreſhments, whereas the other in endleſs torment. *Lazarus reſts in Abrahams boſom*, when the uncharitable *Glutton fries* in perpetual *flames*. And oh that this were throughly weighed, that they would conſider that every degree of unmercifulneſs they ſhew to others, reverts with a rebounded force upon themſelves! Alas, 'tis not ſo much the poor mans Body, as their own Souls that ſue for their Alms. And whenever they ſhut up their bowels of compaſſion from the one, what do they but σφραγίζειν ταμεῖα, *ſeal up* Gods *ſtore-houſes* and treaſuries from the other? When they deny the *crumbs* from their *table*, they deny themſelves *a drop of water to cool their tongues.*

Many men maintain their Luxury at the charge of the Poor, by taking no care to pay what they owe them.

22. But I fear this of Illiberality may paſs for a moderate crime in this Age, when ſo many are guilty of another ſo far tranſcending it. For do we not ſee divers, who inſtead of abating their Exceſſes to relieve the Poor, do *maintain* their Riot upon them? If the deſperate *Debts* of poor Tradeſmen were examined, I doubt not this would appear a ſad truth. 'Tis become ſo faſhionable a thing to run into Scores, and ſo unfaſhionable to pay them, that he is ſcarce thought well-bred, that has not bankrupted one at leaſt of each Trade he deals with. Their only care is to get credulous Merchants, who ſo long as they truſt ſtoutly ſhall have fair words, but if once their faith fail, then, as if the *Soliſidian* doctrine had ſtretcht it ſelf into Traffick as well as Divinity, they are pronounced Reprobates, and as ſolicitouſly avoided as the *Separatiſt* ſhuns a perſon whom he is pleaſed to call carnal. Poſterns and obſcure paſſages are contrived, on purpoſe to eſcape them; ſo that a poor Creditor muſt give many days, nay months attendances, before he can ſo ſurpriſe a *Gentleman*, as to come but to ask his own; and then the beſt return he uſually meets with, is ſome empty promiſes to bribe a delay. But ſometimes he fares much worſe, and as if 'twere a crime not to ſtarve ſilently, he is reviled and reproached, and harſh and contumelious language become his only payment. It has been received as a Maxim, *That we are all kind to our own creatures:* But this caſe ſhews 'tis no univerſal rule; for thoſe who thus make poor men, are of all other, the moſt barbarous to them in their poverty. But let thoſe who thus ſhufflle off their reckonings with men, remember that there will come a day, when they ſhall not be able to decline their Account to God. And with what horror and confuſion muſt they appear at that Audit, when they ſhall be charged not only with the miſſpending their own eſtates, but other mens, the having added robbery to unmercifulneſs?

23. If

23. If in the next place we ſhall reflect on the Apoſtles caution of *not being high-minded* or *truſting in uncertain riches*, we muſt turn to our Bibles to be ſatisfied there was ever any ſuch charge given, there is ſo little of it to be read in mens practices. Humility is a plant, that is carefully weeded out of all rich grounds, accounted a mean degenerous quality, that like Treaſon *attaints* the bloud, and forfeits Nobility. *Gentlemen*, though they are for the moſt part very guiltleſs of the *Phariſee*'s abſtinence, the *faſting twice a week*, do yet tranſcribe the worſe part of his copy, the thinking they are *not like other men*, and believe it a juſtice they owe their birth to do ſo. They have mounted themſelves aloft, and looking down from thoſe Pinacles of Honour, all below ſeem little and contemptible creeping things of the Earth, *Worms and no Men.* I am not ſo for confounding of Qualities, as to exact they ſhould chuſe their Intimates and Companions out of the loweſt rank. I know Prudence as well as Pride has drawn a Partition-wall between them (though perhaps the latter has raiſed it to an unneceſſary height) but I wiſh it might be remembred, that as the Precept of *Not eating Bloud* was deſigned not for it ſelf, but as an Hedge againſt Murther, ſo that juſt diſtance, which Order recommends between the Noble and the Mean, is valuable only as a fence againſt baſe and ignoble practices; true greatneſs conſiſting in deſpiſing not the perſons, but the vices of the vulgar. Yet here alas! the ſcene is quite changed, and many who look the moſt faſtidiouſly on the one, will yet mix freely with the other; and while they ſoar the higher in the opinion of their ſuperiority, do yet ſtoop to the ſordid beſtialities of the moſt abject of men. Nay, indeed this Lure does ſometimes make many of them deſcend even from their punctilioes, and thoſe who at another meeting muſt have lookt for no other treatment but what S. *James* deſcribes, *Jam.* 2. 3. *Stand thou there, or ſit here under my foot-ſtool*, ſhall in the rounds of good fellowſhip be equal with the beſt: Such a Leveller is Debauchery, that it takes off all diſtinctions. But in the mean time how great a ſhame is it, that ſuch vicious motives ſhall have force enough to make them thus degrade themſelves, when all the Engagements of Chriſtianity are not able to do that which is much leſs, to abate any thing of thoſe tumours, thoſe ſwelling conceits of their own greatneſs, or (in the *Pſalmiſt*'s phraſe) to make them *know themſelves to be but Men.*

Rich men are very apt to be puft up with Pride and Contempt of others on the account of their wealth;

24. Nor has the *other* branch of the caution any better ſucceſs among them. 'Tis in many of them too diſcernable, that they place that *Truſt in uncertain Riches*, which they ſhould repoſe only in the *living God*, ſo making his Gifs his Rivals, and raiſing him a Competitor even of his own Bounty. For this we need no other ways of probation, than only to examine, whether it is, that in any caſe of difficulty or diſtreſs they make their earlieſt and moſt importunate addreſſes, for there we may conclude them to fix the greateſt confidence. And I fear 'tis too apparent, that where wealth makes but any the ſlighteſt pretences, promiſes the leaſt aid, though but remote, and at the ſecond hand, it has moſt of their applications. Thus in caſe of *Diſeaſe*, they whoſe plenty enables them for the coſtlier methods of cure, is not their firſt reſort thither? do not their Fees flie faſter than their Prayers? and are they not much haſtier to invite the Phyſician than the Divine? Nay, indeed the latter is ſcarce ever admitted, till the former have forſaken them; a ſhrewd indication, where their prime hopes are built. So again in any diſaſtrous event, the firſt Eſſay is whether Money will heal the Wound. He that is under the diſpleaſure of a Superiour, ſeeks to appeaſe by Preſents, or buys the *friendſhip* of a *Blaſtus*, *Acts* 12. 20.

and prone to truſt in uncertain Riches more than in the living God.

to

to mediate for him. He that is brought before a Tribunal, endeavours with the ſame golden Engine to draw off his Proſecutor, to bend and incline his Judge. He whoſe Wealth makes him purſued as a deſirable Prey, expects his ſafety even from that which is the original of his danger; and as if like a *Scorpion* it alone could cure its own ſting, tries whether a part will ſecure the whole. And in the mean time no attempt is made to call in God to their reſcue; as if he were an idle unconcern'd Spectator of humane affairs, or ſo inconſiderable an Ally, as not to be worth the care of engaging him on their ſide. Nay even in their laſt and dreadfulleſt danger, many ſeem not to quit their dependence on their Wealth; ſome *Teſtamentary Charities* muſt then do wonders for them, and paſs for all thoſe *Fruits of Repentance*, which ſhould ſecure them from the *Wrath to come*. Even thoſe that have drunk the bloud of the Poor, ſuffered the moſt of it to incorporate into their Eſtates, think by diſgorging ſome ſmall part of it (which perhaps lies crude, not yet ſo digeſted) in a *Legacy*, to eaſe their conſciences: So adapting their Reſtitutions to their Rapines, only in this one reſpect, that thoſe as well as theſe are of another mans goods; they never commencing till death hath diſſeiſed them of all propriety, as if the *Iniquity of the Fathers* were in this ſence to be *viſited upon the Children*. Thus *their Wills* become their only Paſs-port, to convey them to *Abraham's* boſom, and by thus *cajoling* the Poor at parting, they truſt to extinguiſh the clamours of all former oppreſſions, and in ſpight of *Solomon* will hope, that *Riches ſhall profit in the day of wrath*. It will not here be pertinent to inquire how many other objects of Truſt they have, which divert them from that one, to which the Apoſtle directs them. It may ſuffice in general to ſay, that none can be ſuppoſed indeed *to truſt on the living God*, but thoſe who by ſincere piety qualifie themſelves for his protection; according to which meaſure 'tis to be feared many even of the faireſt pretenders will be excluded.

Riches are too often a temptation to luxury and wantonneſs.

25. If now we proceed to the *laſt* part of the *Rich mans Duty*, the exerciſe of *Temperance*, we may without an *Augur* divine the return of that Inqueſt. For it having formerly appeared, that they turn that ſtream, which ſhould flow in Charity, to make the fuller current for their Luxury, 'tis viſible they are far from deſigning any ſelf-denial. But if that inference were not proof enough of it, they daily give us ocular demonſtrations: What ſtudious proviſions do they make for the fleſh *to fulfil the luſts thereof? Rom.* 13. 14. Nature affords not Meat delicate enough for their palats; it muſt be adulterated with the coſtly mixtures of Art, before it can become *Gentile* nouriſhment. And in this they are arrived to ſuch a niceneſs, that Cookery is become a very myſterious Trade, the Kitchin has almoſt as many Intricacies as the Schools. And the quantity of their Meat is not leſs extravagant than the kind; One that did but examine their *Bills of Fare*, would think the Dogs appetite were the Epidemick Diſeaſe among them, if he did not conſider they had Eyes to be fed as well as Bellies. Nor will they be ſo Ununiform, as not to have their Drink bear a full proportion with their Meat; and 'twere well if it did no more, that their Drinking had but thoſe ſet hours of their Meals, that ſo there might be at leaſt ſome Intervals and Pauſes in their Debauches; whereas now many perſons allow themſelves no longer Intermiſſions than may juſt qualifie them for a new Exceſs; recover their wits only ſo far, as may put them in capacity of loſing them again.

26. But beſides theſe, there is *another ſort of proviſion for the fleſh*, of which they are no leſs ſolicitous, and which many buy in at very dear rates. The embraces

embraces of a Wife are as nauſeous to them, as *Manna* to the *Iſraelites*. 'Tis Variety they hunt after; and ſo they might have the *Turk*'s *Seraglio*, they would not ſtick to take his *Mahometaniſm* withal. Nay if that were as agreeable to their Reaſon to believe, as to their inclinations to embrace, they would certainly reckon it a conſiderable part of the prize, as that which to the preſent poſſeſſion ſuperadds a liberal reverſion of thoſe bruti∫h delights, and would think they had made a very commodious Bargain, to have ſo exchang'd the Chriſtians preſent purity, and future Heaven.

Wealth oft abuſed to Pride and Exceſs in Apparel.

27. To all theſe Exceſſes, that of their *Apparel* does perfectly correſpond: So much coſt, ſo much buſineſs goes to it, that one may almoſt as cheaply and eaſily rig out a Ship, as *ſet out a Gentleman* in his complete Equipage. How many Artificers go there to the piecing him up? He that ſhould aſſign him one to each Limb, would much contract the number, which is indeed ſo great, that if it were computed 'twould be found it conſtituted moſt of the Trades in a Commonwealth. A ſtrange diſproportion, that the little World ſhould ſo much outvy the Greater; and a lively inſtance it is of the multiplying faculty of Vanity, that can improve Natures ſimple neceſſity of covering, to ſuch an exorbitant exceſs, and has nurſt up the firſt Fig-leaves to ſuch a luxuriant growth, that the *Hercinian Oaks*, which *Mela* tells ſuch wonders of, are but a kind of Pigmy-plant to them that thus over-ſpread the World, and from covering of Shame, are grown to ſhadow and darken Reaſon it ſelf, ſo creating a *Moral* nakedneſs, whilſt they hide a Natural.

Rich men are generally too profuſe and expenſive in their Sports and Recreations.

28. To all the reſt we may add their *Sports* and *Recreations*, the expenſiveneſs whereof is no way inferior to all the former. *Gaming*, like a Quick-ſand, ſwallows up a man in a moment; and how many ſuch Wrecks have theſe latter Ages produced? *Hawks*, and *Hounds*, and *Horſes*, *&c.* are ſomewhat ſlower devourers, yet as they are managed by ſome, tend much to the ſame end: So that methinks ſuch men ſeem to make the ſame menace to their Eſtates, which *Goliah* did to *David*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 44. *I will give thee to the fowls of the Air, and to the beaſts of the field.* Such vaſt numbers of them they have, and thoſe kept with ſuch niceneſs and curioſity, as if they had a deſign to debauch the poor animals, and infect them with their luxury. 'Tis now no news in the literal ſence to have the *Childrens bread given to Dogs*; and it may within a while be as little, to have not only their Children, but themſelves want it. For Prodigality is of the nature of the Viper, and eats out the bowels of that Wealth which gave it birth; and *Actæon*'s fate was both Emblem and Story, *to be eaten up with his Dogs.*

A prudent overſight and moderate improvement of their Eſtates is a great advantage to them.

29. We have ſeen now how much their *Practice* ſwerves from their *Duty*: Let us next a little conſider, whether they might not be happier if they were regulated by it. And firſt, *a prudent overſight* of their *Eſtates* is ſure far from being ſuch an oppreſſing burden as ſome are willing to fancy it. For if it be moderate, and ſuch only I recommend, it is ſuppoſed to exclude all painful and diſquieting ſolicitudes, and then it becomes only of the nature of a Divertiſement, helps them off with ſome of thoſe ſpare hours, whoſe emptineſs becomes their Load, and which they would elſe be in pain, and probably at no ſmall coſt to diſpoſe of. And I ſee not why it ſhould not be full as pleaſant at the inſtant, to talk of their own affairs, as of other mens, (which yet are the uſual entertainment of thoſe that neglect their own:) to take up Accounts at home, as Reckonings at the Tavern: And I am ſure 'tis much more ſo in the conſequences of it, as much as Peace is above Diſcord and Tumult, Plenty above Indigence and Neceſſity.

Contentedness with their Estates is the greatest wealth and happiness of this World.

30. Next for *Contentment*, universal consent supersedes the labour of proving that a happiness, it being unanimously accorded to be the Elixir and Quintessence of all that pretends to that title; to be to all these outward things, as the Soul is to the Body, that which animates and inspirits them, without which they are but dead, yea noisom carcasses, pressures instead of enjoyments. This is the true *Philosophers stone*, that turns all it touches into Gold; the poor man is Rich with it, and the Richest poor without it. Whoever therefore desires to improve his Estate, let him begin his culture or husbandry upon his mind, plant there this Tree of Life, the shade whereof will yield him a perpetual refreshment, 'twill make him always as rich as he desires to be; and he certainly knows not what he asks, that demands more.

Liberality and Almsdeeds do rather increase than diminish an Estate.

31. The next Duty, that of *Liberality*, may perhaps be thought not to have so amiable an aspect; but it is only by those who look upon it through false Glasses: Men generally consider it as a piece of spiritual rapine, an Engine framed by Divines to force open their Coffers, and plunder them without a War. But if they would but turn the right end of the *Perspective*, 'twould then have a quite contrary appearance; they would discern that it is the means to multiply, not diminish their store, a more profitable way of usury than any the greediest Extortioner hath ever found out. 'Tis *a lending to the Lord, Prov.* 19. 17. who surely is the most solvent Debtor any man can deal with, and one who never makes scanty retributions. This I am confident might be attested eventually true by all those who have attempted to make the experiment. The only prejudice that can lie against their Testimony is the paucity of those that have so attempted (and would to God men would conspire to solve that objection) for were all charitable persons summon'd to give in their accounts, I doubt not it would appear their bounty had enriched, not impoverished them. I am sure I have met with several remarkable instances of it, but never yet with one to the contrary; and therefore if either reason or precedent may have force, he that considers but rightly his own temporal Interest cannot but have appetite to this Duty, in respect of himself. And yet where there are many bowels, this is but a faint inducement compared with that which arises from the calamities of the persons to be relieved. The wants of the Poor are loud and passionate Orators, such as cannot miss to work upon any, on whom covetousness hath not first wrought the unhappy *Metamorphosis*, of turning them into stone. And these having once conveyed into a mans mind a compassionate regret, himself groans under that pressure, which he sees crushing the other: And then what can be more pleasant than by a seasonable charity to ease both? None doubts of the Receivers delight, but sure that is short of the Givers, by how much the interior sense is more subtle and acute than the exterior. Would God those who make it their Trade to hunt after pleasures, would try but this One piece of Epicurism, and then I doubt not, they would acknowledge that all meat is insipid, compared with that, which they eat with the poor mans mouth; the most splendid apparel sordid and inglorious, in respect of that they wear upon his back; and all pleasures and recreations joyless and uneasie, balanced with those transcendent delights which attend the exercise of Christian liberality.

Rich men ought to watch against Pride as a very troublesome and ungrateful vice.

32. Nor have they in the next place any reason to suspect the Apostle treacherous to their present interest, when he seeks to despoil them of that either *Pride*, or confidence which their Riches are apt to create. For the former 'tis certain all haughty persons may very properly interrogate themselves

themſelves in that form, we find *Wiſd.* 5. 8. *What hath Pride profited us, or what good hath Riches with our vaunting brought us?* It would ſurely puzzle the moſt experienced man to define what there is in Pride, that can afford any felicity. The utmoſt that can be pretended is, that it is a lively chearful thing to have good thoughts of ones ſelf; but he that can in earneſt make this plea for Pride, does in juſtice owe as fair an *encomium* to *Bedlam:* For according to this meaſure that contains the happieſt people, there being thoſe that are the moſt highly rapt in the opinion of their own Excellencies. Yet ſure we ſhould judge him in good Election for the place, that ſhould look upon it with appetite. But admit this might indeed paſs for a pleaſure, yet it is the parent of a far greater uneaſineſs, and like a carcaſe breeds a worm that devours it ſelf. For he that looks on himſelf with ſuch a reverence, expects that all others ſhould do ſo too, and when he fails in that aim (as none ſo frequently does, as the proud) what diſquiets and impatiencies is he under! ſuch as infinitely overwhelm all the pleaſure of his vain complacencies. A little diſreſpect from *Mordecai* is able to evacuate all *Haman*'s proſperity. Such a Cheat and Impoſtor is Pride, that whilſt it pretends to exalt, it debaſes; whilſt it elevates a man above others, it really ſubjects him to them, puts him in their power to torment and cruciate, and whilſt it makes ſhew of advancing, 'tis but in the ſame manner that the Rack extends the ſtature by diſlocating the Joynts. And then I hope 'twill be no unfriendly office to perſwade men to keep themſelves from that engine of pain, or to recommend to them ſuch an humility of mind, as may preſerve them in that ſecurity and compoſedneſs, which is fundamentally neceſſary to all true happineſs.

33. The very ſame judgment is to be made of the other Branch of the Caution, the *not truſting in uncertain Riches, but in the living God*; which is moſt viſibly every mans preſent concernment. He that can entertain a doubt of it, let him but fall into the hands of ſome treacherous or but impotent perſon, that ſhall in ſome important affairs betray his truſt, or deceive his hopes, and then let him tell me whether it be not a mans immediate and moſt preſſing Intereſt, to build his confidences on the Rock, not on the Sand. Nothing but the amazing exigencies of a ſinking man can excuſe the folly of catching at Reeds; but he that ſhould deliberately elect ſuch Supporters would be thought as mad, as he is ſure to be miſerable. Yet this is but the faint and imperfect Emblem of him who reſts upon his Wealth: Whereas on the other ſide he that ſhelters himſelf under the ſhadow of the Almighty, is poſſeſt of a moſt inexpugnable Fortreſs. For how can he fail of ſecurity that has Omnipotency for his Guard, or be deluded in his truſts, that depends on Truth it ſelf? Let theſe ſo diſtant ſtates be compared, and then ſure I ſhall not need to anticipate any mans judgment, but may leave him to pronounce on which ſide his Intereſt as well as Duty lies in this particular.

'Tis more ſafe and happy to truſt in God than in any worldly Eſtate and Condition whatever.

34. Laſtly, *Temperance* alſo puts in her claim to *Pleaſure*, which I preſume thoſe will be ſure to reſiſt, who place that wholly in the ſatisfaction of the ſenſual appetite. Yet I believe one might take even theſe men in ſuch a ſeaſon, when they ſhould be forced to give up their verdict for it. Come to the *Glutton* when he is labouring under the load of an overcharged ſtomach; to the *Drunkard* when his mornings qualm is revenging on him his laſt nights debauch; to the *luſtful* perſon, when the torment of his bones admoniſhes him of the ſins of his fleſh: And then ask them whether *Temperance* be not more pleaſant than its contrary. I can ſcare think the Devil has any ſuch ſtout *Confeſſors*, but will then betray

A great deal more pleaſure in Temperance and Purity than in the contrary vices.

his cauſe. But this vertue is in it ſelf too amiable to need any of theſe Foils to illuſtrate it; the pleaſure of ſubduing a Luſt, of denying an Appetite, is not only nobler, but greater than any is to be had in the moſt tranſporting moment of ſatisfying them. Every man will call him a Brute, that when an Enemy is in the Field loſes the opportunity of a glorious Victory, and expoſes himſelf to certain Captivity, rather than forſake his Liquor, or other ſordid pleaſure. And this is the juſt deciſion of the preſent caſe; Our Luſts are our mortalleſt Enemies, and every time they aſſault us, 'tis in our choice either by reſiſting them to gain a ſignal Conqueſt, or elſe by ſtooping to thoſe deſpicable Lures they hold out to us, to be vanquiſhed by them. He that chuſes the laſt, if he have any ſhadow of pleaſure, 'tis only that of a *Beaſt*, (like a Horſe, who though he hath indeed the ſatisfaction of receiving Meat, yet he alſo takes the Bridle, yea the Whip too from the ſame hand.) 'Tis the former only, that is the pleaſure of a *man*, which I ſuppoſe ſufficient to evince to which the difference belongs. For ſure none can think God hath been ſo unkind to his own Image in humane nature, as in the diſpenſation of felicity to aſſign the larger ſhare to the *Brutes*. And therefore in this particular as well as the reſt we may conclude, that he is not only the moſt pious but the moſt happy perſon, that makes the right uſe of his Wealth.

SECT. VI.

Of the Third Advantage, that of Time.

The preciouſneſs of Time beſt learnt by the eſtimate dying perſons put upon it.

1. LET us now proceed to the Third Advantage, that of *Time*: Which though men do often ſo induſtriouſly waſte, as if it were rather a burthen than an advantage, yet the differing eſtimates they make of it, when it is near expiring, the paſſionate *Death-bed* wiſhes of a few days reprieve, witneſs that it has a real value. For were it an empty uſeleſs thing, it would not then begin to appear conſiderable, when all other vanities grow in contempt with us. The unhappineſs of it is, that men learn to prize it, as they do moſt other good things, rather by the want than the enjoying, buy the skill of trading with the loſs of the Talent, which ſhould maintain the Traffick, and then only come to account it a treaſure, when they can no longer diſpoſe it to any benefit; and that diſpoſing alone is it that can render it truly valuable. It is therefore a moſt neceſſary providence to learn this art of improvement, this piece of ſpiritual husbandry, without which a mans ſelf becomes that accurſed ſoil the Apoſtle mentions, *Heb. 6. 8. Whoſe end is to be burned.* Let us therefore a-while examine what are thoſe Imployments of our Time, which may render it moſt fertile to our preſent comfort, and future account.

The happineſs of Eternity depends on the well-husbanding of Time here.

2. Every man ſays (though perhaps few conſider) that *our time here is but a Prologue to Eternity* elſewhere, and that the condition of that Eternity, whether happy or miſerable, depends upon the well husbanding of this time. That therefore and that only can be the right managery of it, which tends to make our future Eſtate as happy, as it is ſure to be laſting. To this purpoſe God hath chalked us out ſome great lines of Duty, from whence ſo many leſſer do ariſe, as will, if we will permit them, twiſt and wind themſelves with every hour of our lives. And though theſe Duties are in the kind of them obligatory to all conditions of men, yet frequenter Acts of them are expected from thoſe, whoſe Qualities and fortunes give them more vacancy from ſecular toils.

3. For

3. For certainly it is not to be fanſied, that God who has put an active Principle into our nature ſhould induſtriouſly provide for the ſuppreſſing its operations in any, devote ſuch a Select number of men, as an *Hecatomb* to be offered up to *Idleneſs*. And yet much leſs can it be thought, that he ſhould ſo promote that Iniquity, which he profeſſes to hate, as to deſign them to the purſuits of that, *Manumit* them from labour, to leave them freer for vice. And if neither of theſe can be ſuppoſed, if their leiſure were not indulged them either that they might do nothing, or do ill, there remains only a third end imaginable, and that is the doing good; (for as the Sports and Paſtimes, the beſt of them come ſo near to idleneſs, and the worſt of them to Vice, that as the one is not to be allowed any, ſo the other no conſiderable part of their time. Now becauſe *none is good but one, that is God, Mark* 10. 18. we can take our meaſures of good actions only from his preſcription; and ſo thoſe which he has commended as ſuch to Mankind in general, point out to this particular rank of men the nature of their Exerciſes, as their eſpecial Vacancy and leiſure does the higher degrees of them.

God hath allowed Gentlemen this Talent of Time, not to be idle or abuſe it; but to improve and do good in.

4. And firſt thoſe of *Piety* towards God juſtly challenge a great ſhare of their *Time*. For whereas God may ſeem to have limited and confined the poor mans zeal, by that Rule of *preferring mercy* to themſelves *before ſacrifice* to him; he does by exempting the rich from thoſe neceſſities tacitly require their *devotion* to ſwell up to ſome proportion with his bounty to them, who being freed from thoſe weights wherewith others are clogged and incumbred, even nature it ſelf ſuggeſts the expectation of their ſoaring higher. He has put them at a diſtance from the meaner cares and ſolicitudes of life, as if he were jealous thoſe might prove his rivals, and keep them from growing into a cloſer intimacy with himſelf. And ſhall this deſign of his love be defeated? And when he has thus ſecured himſelf from one ſort of Competitor, ſhall more and baſer be ſought out, every the triflingeſt and vileſt Entertainment be courted to come and ſupplant him? This were indeed to anſwer that odious character of the *Adultereſs, Ezek.* 16. 34. which was not *ſolicited*, but *did ſolicit*. And thoſe that can make ſuch unworthy and provoking returns to ſo endearing a kindneſs, evince themſelves deſtitute not only of grace, but of all degrees of common good nature. For when he ſo projects for their familiarity and converſe, what can be more inhumane and ingrate, than thus ſcornfully to decline it? Yet under this charge all thoſe will certainly fall, who do not employ (nay devote) every day ſome conſiderable part of this their vacant time to the keeping up their intercourſe with God, by Reading, Prayer and Meditation.

The duties of Piety ought, in the firſt place, to challenge a ſhare of Gentlemens Time and Leiſure:

5. In the next place, *Themſelves* put in for a part. But here I mean not thoſe bruti ſh ſenſual ſelves, which have in many (like *Pharaoh*'s lean kine) devoured the nobler and more excellent; but it is the more divine and ſublimated part of them, on which their time is to be laid out. And here they can never want buſineſs, that being in ſeveral reſpects a very proper object of their diligence. For firſt, their *Underſtandings*, how clear and vigorous ſoever, attain not their height at once, are not like *Adam* created in a ſtate of maturity and perfection, but like his degraded poſterity, make gradual motions towards it, advance by ſeveral ſteps and degrees of proficiency; nor can we in this life aſcend to ſuch a *Non ultra*, as excludes a poſſibility of growth. So that no advantage of Education can ſuperſede the uſe of After-induſtry, that being ſtill able to make farther improvements, bring in new acceſſions to their Knowledge. And this

The duties they owe toward themſelves put in for another ſhare of their Time: And firſt, the improving of their minds and underſtandings:

this is ſo inviting an entertainment, as may very reaſonably expect their companies ſome hours of the day in their Studies.

The right ordering and governing of their Wills and Affections is another duty they owe to themſelves.

6. But though this be a conſiderable, yet is it not the weightieſt part of that care they owe themſelves. For as the Soul conſider'd in its *Intellect*, may thus become their Pupil, ſo in its *Morals* it has often need to be their Patient. For though in its Original Conſtitution it was perfectly pure and healthy, yet by inhabiting in this peſthouſe the Fleſh, it hath contracted much of its contagion; and by how much the more delicate and refined its compoſition is, ſo much the more mortal are the diſeaſes to which it is ſubject. It will therefore require a cloſe and wary attendance. A Phyſician that has a nice and tender Patient, muſt be very aſſiduous in his care, obſervant of all ſymptomes, watchful againſt all accidents. And ſo certainly ſhould men be here; they ſhould make daily obſervations how their ghoſtly ſtrength increaſes or decays, what Humour moſt predominates, whether Choler boil up into rage, Phlegm freez into ſloth; whether the Sanguineſs of their temper make them luſtful, or the melancholy revengeful, and accordingly apply their ſpiritual Purgatives, the Baths, or the *Palæſtra*, preſcribe rules of Diet and Exerciſe. And doubtleſs whoever makes theſe daily ſtrict inſpections into himſelf, will by the ineſtimable benefit he receives from it, be taught how great a bleſſing his Time is, and how much a greater to have grace thus to employ it.

The duty they owe their neighbour requires another ſhare of their Time.

7. But though a *Mans ſelf* be a *Province* wide enough to take up a good part of his time, yet muſt he not ſo ingroſs it, as to defraud his *Neighbour*, who has alſo a right to ſhare in it. God having made man after his own Image, has (as part of that) ſtamped upon him the Bounty and Communicativeneſs of his nature: And therefore when we live wholly to our ſelves, we raſe and deface that Impreſs. And when 'tis remembred that the hainouſneſs even of *Murder* is by God pronounced to ariſe from the *violation of his Image*, *Gen. 9. 6.* parity of reaſon muſt conclude this no light guilt. Nor is it only our Goods we are to impart (for that were a very partial Tranſcript of that Bounty we are to imitate, which gives us ſo much beſides) but in general whatever other Ability we have by which our Neighbour may receive advantage: And ſo a man has as many employments of his time, as he either finds or can make opportunities of doing good to others. I ſay make; for ſure ſince God hath conſtituted Love to our Neighbour one of the fundamental laws to Mankind, we are not to look upon it only as an accident or caſualty, but as a main and deliberate buſineſs of our lives; not refer it wholly to chance whether ever we ſhall do an act of this kind or no; but induſtriouſly ſeek out and improve occaſions. Thus we find the Liberality of our Bleſſed Lord repreſented to us in the *parable of the great Supper*, *Luke* 14. 6. where there was not only liberal proviſions made for ſuch as would come in, but importunity uſed to draw them, particular invitations made to the *poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; and when that brought not in gueſts enough, the *High-ways and Hedges* were to be ranſacked, and a general Preſs, as it were, made of men, to receive not the Earneſt-penny of Death, (which is uſually the ſignification of our Preſs-money) but the Antepaſt of Eternal life. O that all thoſe who pretend to greatneſs of mind, would copy out this Munificence, that they would prevent mens deſires, and invite them to come and be obliged by them. For want of this, many occaſions of doing benefits are loſt; the modeſty of ſome, perhaps the pride of others, averts them from requeſting thoſe aſſiſtances they moſt need. It were therefore the nobleſt Study a *Gentleman* could entertain himſelf with,

with, to ſearch the various Wants of thoſe within his ſphere. But then he muſt be ſure to do it with a candid deſign, the more opportunely to apply himſelf to their aid: He muſt not treacherouſly inquire, who wants knowledge to deride, but inſtruct them; not hunt out a debauched perſon, to make him his Companion, but his Convert; not find out quarrels to foment, but compoſe them; in a word, not pry into other mens concernments, like a buſie body, but a Friend; not to comply with his own curioſity, but their need. And now he that pays a juſt Tribute of his Time to theſe three grand Duties, will (when the other dues to Nature, temporal Affairs, and neceſſary Civilities are deducted) not have much to ſacrifice either to Idleneſs or Vice, but will rather think he wants Time than Buſineſs.

8. But alas, the full leiſure they generally find for the direct contrary employments, witneſſes too irrefragably that they are not thus taken up. It is true indeed, we find God often in their Mouths, but it is rather in Oaths, than Prayers; as if they meant their profanations ſhould be the only teſtimony that they believed a Deity. How many are there ſuch profeſt Votaries to *Bacchus*, that their Knees are reſerved only for him, never to be bent but in drinking of Healths; that ſeem to have enacted to themſelves the profaner part of *Darius*'s Law, *Dan.* 6. 7. that of *asking no Petition of God*, only herein out-vying him, that their's is for an indefinite, not limited time; who reckon ſaying of Prayers among thoſe Pedantick tasks of their childhood, which expire with the Rod and *Ferula*, and can never think fit to debaſe their more Manly ſtate to it, unleſs perhaps a reſtleſs night may force them to call it in to ſupply the place of a more uſual and pleaſing *Anodyne*. Whether this be not the pitch of many *Gentlemens* Devotion, I appeal to any that obſerves their Practice.

But the Gentlemen of this Age find little Time for Piety and Devotion;

9. Nor have they much more to do in the Library, than the Oratory, unleſs it be ſtored with *Romances*, any deeper ſort of reading is as formidable to them, as the Mines or Galleys; nor do they without wonder look at thoſe who can voluntarily ſet themſelves to tug at thoſe Oars. But Divinity is beyond all others under prejudice with them, decried not only as a crabbed, but *ungentile* ſtudy; ſo that upon pain of Reproach, none are to know more of it, than may juſt qualifie them to deride it; or read the Bible to any other purpoſe, than to enable them to blaſpheme God in his own ſtile. If theſe Men may be ſaid at all to converſe with God, it is in the ſame manner that the Phariſees did with our Saviour, with the inſidious deſign of *entangling him in his talk*, *Matth.* 22. And ſure the more time is thus ſpent, the worſe.

and as little for ſerious and profitable ſtudies.

10. Proportionably to this they acquit themſelves of the *other* parts of this Duty; that *Time* which they ſhould beſtow either in preventing or curing their ſpiritual Maladies, they lay out wholly in contracting or increaſing them. They have made a moſt ſtrict league with the Fleſh, and like faithful Confederates they omit no endeavour to ſtrengthen its Party, to ſupply it with freſh forces, the expence of the *whole day* is managed wholly in order to that end. Thus that they may be ſure to keep their Luſt high and vigorous, they give it a nouriſhing breakfaſt of Sloth in the morning, a full meal of gluttony at noon, beſides multitudes of collations in obſcene Diſcourſe and Fancies, all the day: And with theſe Auxiliaries, it need not doubt to maintain the Field againſt poor macerated Chaſtity. So again, leſt Sobriety ſhould happen to ſurprize them, and gain but the honour of one Day, how vigilant are they to give it the firſt aſſault? Scarce a day that they draw not up in *Batalia* againſt it, and ſeldom miſs giving it a total Rout;

The moſt of their Time is ſpent in Sloth and Luxury;

Rout; and if ſleep like a Miſt befriend it to ſteal upon them in the morning again, yet that little ſucceſs is but a preparation to a more ſignal Defeat in the afternoon, which is with many, a time allotted wholly to theſe skirmiſhes; perhaps the chaſe followed all night, nay, purſued ſo far by ſome, till an habitual Sottiſhneſs ſave them the labour of theſe Quotidian Combats. Nor is their Pride ſo affronted, as to be forgot in the diſtribution of their Time, a good ſcantling of it is cut out to its uſe; ſome in contriving and deſigning their Cloaths, and ſome in putting them on; ſome in admiring themſelves, and ſome in projecting to be admired by others; ſome in hearing flatteries, and more in reflecting and ruminating upon them.

and what they can ſpare from their debauchery, is uſually ſpent in vain ſports and paſtimes.

11. As for thoſe broken parcels of *Time*, which are not thus devoted to theſe or ſome other ſet and ſolemn Senſualities, they are gleaned up by Sports and unſignificant paſtimes: Nay, even ſome who abſtain from the former, do yet ſo wholly abandon themſelves to the latter, that their lives, become utterly unprofitable. Under this number I have no intention to include all who allow themſelves Recreations; I know ſome divertiſement is ſo neceſſary both to the Body and Mind of a man, that if it keep within moderate bounds, it is but a juſt debt to himſelf, and cannot fall under any ill character: But that which is reprehenſible in this matter, is the exceſs and inordinacy of it, the making that a buſineſs, which ſhould be but a diverſion. And this we ſee too uſual with many, who abſurdly ſtretch this priviledge of their *Gentility*, even till it break; purſue their ſports of Hawking and Hunting, *&c.* ſo vehemently and aſſiduouſly, that ere they are aware, they adopt theſe their Callings; never conſidering that a Faulconer or Huntſman is indeed as mean a Vocation, as thoſe they moſt deſpiſe. But whatever other paſtimes of this nature any man ſuffers to uſurp his time, he does in it extremely reproach himſelf, tacitely confeſſes, that he is unfit for generous and manly imployments, and calls himſelf Child, while he thus trifles and plays away his days.

Gaming, as now uſed, is both a great ſin and expence of Time.

12. I know not whether I may rank the great and *deep Gameſters* in this File: For though the nature of their imployment belong to it, yet there are ſuch conſiderable ruinous effects of it, as ſeem to place it in the number of more ſerious Ills. And indeed, though Cuſtom hath called it Play, yet the many anxious fears and uneaſie Commotions which uſually attend it, evince the great impropriety of the Title, and would more reaſonably have given it a name of the direct contrary importance. But as feigned names are commonly an art of concealing perſons, ſo this Trade aſſumes the ſtile of Divertiſement, indeed to diſguiſe its true original which undoubtedly is Covetouſneſs. For, what imaginable cauſe can there be aſſigned, beſides the deſire of Winning, that ſhould make men venture what they are ſo unwilling to loſe? It is certain, he that plays for a Piece, has as much of the divertive part, as he that ſtakes a thouſand: And were that all were deſigned, men need not, and certainly would not ſo profuſely overbuy what offers it ſelf at ſo much a cheaper rate. I know this is a motive men think too ſordid to own, but would God they would once learn (in this better ſenſe) to revere themſelves as well as others, and deſpiſe to be prevailed on by what they are aſhamed to avow. But the event ordinarily ſpeaks it as great a Folly, as Meanneſs, of which there are too many ſad inſtances in the ſhipwrackt Fortunes of theſe Adventurers. And indeed there is nothing wonderful in it, but that men will be ſo mad as to run the hazard. For that being ſuppoſed, it is not at all ſtrange to ſee them ſink under it. For a man has here to deal not with Chance alone (which yet were

were but a tickle bottom to imbark in) but with ſuch combinations of Deceit, that even good Fortune it ſelf will not ſecure him: So that he that has not learnt to Plough with the ſame Heifer, is like to make but ſad Husbandry of it. And even thoſe that have, if they happen to get ſome few good Crops, yet they quite wear out the ſoil with them, forfeit that Reputation with all conſidering men, which ſhould let them in to farther opportunities, and leave themſelves to live not ſo much upon their own Wits, as other mens Follies. It is true indeed, that hath in theſe latter days proved a pretty large *Common* to graze on, and ſome have ſeemed to thrive well upon it; but generally ſuch Cattle meet at laſt with a pinching Winter, which leaves them as bare and meagre, as ever. In ſhort, Cheating has uſually a reflexed efficacy, and deceives none more than thoſe that uſe it: Yet ſuch a ſtroak hath it now got in Gaming, that in moſt Companies it leaves men only this miſerable choice, Whether they will be active or paſſive in it. Which methinks ſhould be enough to awaken men, as immoderate Tyrannies uſe to do, to vindicate their Liberties, and reduce Gaming from this exorbitancy to its Primitive uſe, make it ceaſe to be a Trade, and become a Recreation: And that too bounded within ſuch juſt limits, that it may not incroach on thoſe hours which ſhould be deſtined to greater concernments. But as it is between this and the reſt, either Impertinencies or Vices, all their time is ſo pre-ingaged and foreſtalled, that their moſt important intereſt is left forlorn and neglected; they have as little Leiſure as Will to conſider the poor Soul, or ſcarce to remember that they carry any ſuch trifle about them.

13. And now they that thus forget God and themſelves, no wonder if they afford little conſideration to their brethren. They will not be guilty of ſuch an *Indecorum*, or deny the Body of ſin its exact ſymmetry, by making this part unproportionable to the reſt: And therefore they either allow no part of *their Time* to *others*, or do it to ſuch inverted perverſe purpoſes, as makes the payment worſe than robbery. Thus many beſtow *Viſits* on others, not out of any purpoſe of kindneſs, but either to trifle away their own time, or to make obſervations, what they can ſpy ridiculous to entertain their laughter. A myſtery the *London* viſitants are generally well read in, who have put this buſineſs long ſince into a ſetled courſe; ſo that the diſcoveries of one Viſit ſets them in a ſtock of defaming, backbiting diſcourſe for the next, and ſo ſucceſſively *ad infinitum*. So again, many who call themſelves *Gentlemen*, much to the reproach of that title, if they can find out a *young Heir* of much wealth and little prudence, how officious, how diligent are they in attending him? Watching him as gladly as a Vulture does the fall of a Carcaſe, till they find an advantage to rook him at Play, entangle him in Suretiſhip, or perhaps betray him to ſome mean and unequal Match. So if they hear but of a *beautiful Woman*, what contrivances, what deſigns do they lay, firſt to ſee, and then to corrupt her; make it a buſineſs to themſelves, as well as a trade to their agents and factors, to ſpring ſuch game? and upon ſuch occaſions as theſe can liberally ſacrifice their *Time*, of which when any Charitable office would borrow from them but ſome few minutes, they are then ſuch buſie perſons, they can by no means afford it. A *Nabal*'s blunt and *churliſh refuſal*, or at beſt a *Felix*'s put off to *a convenient ſeaſon*, are the uſual returns to ſuch motions. But to anticipate the Propoſal, to go in queſt of ſuch Opportunities, looks with them like a piece of *Knight-errantry*, has ſo little of their practice, that it ſcarce eſcapes their ſcorn.

A great deal of Time is ſpent in idle and impertinent viſits, or in enſnaring the Innocence of Youth in both Sexes.

The account that we must give of this loſt and miſ-ſpent Time will be ſad and heavy.

14. And now what a heavy Bill of Indictment is like one day to be brought in againſt them, when God, their Souls, and their Neighbours ſhall all joyn in their Charge! Oh that they would ſeaſonably conſider how ſadly obnoxious they are to it, and that condemnation which will inevitably follow it; that ſo they may according to Chriſts counſel, *Matth.* 5. 25. *agree with theſe adverſaries while they are in the way*, and by yielding to each of them for the future a juſt portion of their *Time*, compound the buſineſs, ſtop the Proceſs againſt them. That they would remember, that of all their prodigalities, this of their Time is the moſt deſperate, ſuch as is moſt impoſſible to redeem, and yet that wherein they are of all others the deepleſt concerned. And this they would certainly be convinced of, if their Aiery fancies could but ſo condenſe into Earth, as to bring them into any acquaintance with their Beds of duſt, give them ſome foretaſte of their Dying terrors: For let them but ſadly think what they would then give for ſome few of thoſe Days they now ſtudy to fling away, and they cannot chuſe but infer the neceſſity of being better Husbands. We read in Scripture of the Demoniacks *dwelling among the Tombs*: But the Devil has ſure changed that habitation; for thoſe whom he now poſſeſſes he permits not to converſe at all there, as knowing it is the propereſt preparative to his diſpoſſeſſion. And doubtleſs it would be the moſt powerful *Exorciſm*, as of all others, ſo of this Evil ſpirit (this filching Devil, that thus ſteals from men their precious hours) often to deſcend into the Vault or *Charnel-houſe*, and by ſerious conſideration how ſhort their *Time* is, to inforce upon themſelves a care of redeeming it.

Much more pleaſure in ſpending our Time in the ſervice of God than in the ſervice of Sin and Vice.

15. Nor need they fear, that to *redeem their Time*, they muſt ſell their Pleaſures, give up themſelves to a joyleſs ſtate of life. For though it is true they muſt reſign their counterfeit, they ſhall have real Delights in exchange; they muſt part with their Glaſs, but ſhall have Gold inſtead of it. And as none but a rude *Indian* will repine at that bargain in the Literal, ſo none but a ruder Chriſtian can diſlike it in the Moral ſenſe. For in the firſt place, he that imploys his *time* in converſing with God, is not only more honourably and more profitably, but alſo more pleaſantly buſied than he can poſſibly be any other way. We all ſay, *That God is the Center of felicity*: But he gives himſelf the lye, that does not withal confeſs, that the cloſer acquaintance we have with him, the nearer approach we make to happineſs. For whoever believed the Sun to be the Fountain of heat, and yet feared to freez by drawing near its Rays? Indeed none but the down-right Atheiſt can with any tolerable Logick, diſpute the pleaſantneſs of this Duty. For can any whoſe Faith has ſet up a God, ſuffer their fancies to dreſs him like a Fiend? Put on him ſuch unlovely ſhapes, as may beget averſion, deter them from approaching to him? Can they call him a Deity, to whom they will not attribute ſo much as they will to every ingenuous man, the honour of being good Company? This is to be not only profane but abſurd. And if there be any of ſo ſhort Diſcourſe, I ſuppoſe him uncapable of conviction by Argument: The common Proverb hath aſſigned him his Teacher, *viz. Experience*. Let him by frequent, yet reverent Addreſſes to God, grow into ſome familiarity with him, bring himſelf within diſtance of receiving his refreſhing Influences, and then he will diſcover how very unkind he hath been to himſelf in thus long holding off. In humane Converſations we uſe not to find the guſt and reliſh of them, till we arrive to ſome degree of Freedom: They that converſe as ſtrangers, are under conſtraints and uneaſineſs.

And

And certainly the main cauſe of that diſguſt men have to this Spiritual entercouſe, is their unaccuſtomedneſs to it. They addreſs to God perfectly as ſtrangers, now and then pay him a ſlight Viſit, as it were by way of formality and complement; and then no wonder if it be neither ſatisfactory to God nor themſelves. But then 'tis ſure great injuſtice to defame that as unpleaſant, which becomes ſo only by their own ill managery; to ſay there is no water in the Well, only becauſe they neglect to provide a Bucket for the drawing of it up.

The improvement of the underſtanding in knowledge and learning, affords a great deal of pleaſure.

16. In the next place 'tis ſure, their *Souls* mean them no malice in exacting part of their *Time*. For firſt, what they beſtow in improving and exalting their *Underſtandings*, does not only bring them in advantages in the end, but affords them alſo very fair accommodations by the way. Learning yields ſuch variety of agreeable entertainments, that like the *Manna in the Wilderneſs*, it adapts it ſelf to every mans taſte, he that likes not one ſort may fit himſelf with another; and ſure he muſt have a ſtrangely vitiated palate, to whom none of them will reliſh. I can ſcarce think Nature has produced any thing ſo diſtemper'd; but men take up general and implicit prejudices, and will look on Books in no other notion but as Taskmaſters, whereas if they would but conſider them as Companions, they could not miſs of one kind or other, to find a pleaſant converſation among them.

The great advantage of maſtering and governing our Paſſions and Appetites.

17. As for that portion of their *Time* which is ſpent in attendance on the yet more ſpiritual part of them, 'tis rather a gift than a robbery, to help them to ſuch a way of expence. Ingenuous men think it a prize when they meet an opportunity to reſcue from the ſullage of time any thing that carries the ſtamp of ancient worth and Nobility. But this is a piece of the greateſt Antiquity, of the nobleſt, yea divineſt Impreſs. How can mens hours be better laid out, than in reſtoring it to its primitive luſtre, in wiping off that ſoil wherewith the ſteam of boiling paſſions hath obſcured it, and by disburdening it of thoſe loads of noxious humors under which it labours, like good Phyſicians, recover it from a languiſhing, infirm, to a vigorous athletique habit? And ſure the ſatisfaction of this muſt far exceed all other entertainments. Indeed that which is uſually taken up inſtead of it, can with no juſtice pretend to any tolerable complacency. No man envies his felicity, but contemns his ſordid and abject ſpirit, that picks out the baſeſt and unworthieſt company: And ſhall it here paſs for pleaſure to conſort only with the Plebeian part of himſelf, thoſe ſenſual Appetites, which are the Common people of this Little world, to ſpend all his time in Treating and Careſſing of theſe, and in the interim let the Soul, which is of ſo noble an extraction, ſo excellent endowments, ſtand by neglected, nay be trodden to death in the croud of this vulgar rabble? Certainly this is a Tragedy, that no man could ſee upon the Stage without indignation: Yet God knows, this is it men daily act over with applauſe to themſelves. Would God they would once ſhift the Scene, and let the oppreſt Soul have its ſeaſon of triumphing: Doubtleſs they would find it more pleaſant to ſhare in its Conqueſts than in its ruine. We read indeed of ſome Nations that have by the *rites* of a barbarous religion been forced to make *Humane ſacrifices:* Yet we find not that they had ſo ſlaughtered Humanity it ſelf, as to make it matter of delight. And has our Civility ſo far out-done their Barbariſm, that it ſhall be pleaſure to do that in ſpight of our Religion, which they did in obedience to theirs? To butcher the Man within us, and leave nothing but our outward Form and inward Guilt to difference us from Beaſts? He that

disclaims this, must necessarily confess the pleasure lies on the other side, in rescuing the Spirit from the usurpations, yea tyranny of the Flesh; and consequently that the Time he thus bestows is not lost, but improved to his own greatest present, as well as future advantages.

The like advantage may be expected in that Time which is laid out for the good and benefit of others.

18. The like may (in the last place) be said of that part of it which is laid out to the benefit of others, which is that which brings us to taste the most delicious of humane delights: The pleasure of Obliging being of all those the most ravishing and transporting. And for this we need not the verdict of Christianity: The Philosopher attests it as well as the Divine. Nay it is so received a truth, that scarce any man will avow so much ill nature as to resist it in discourse, how much soever his practice disowns it. Indeed this is a pleasure of so exalted, so quintessential a kind, that what *Herod*'s Auditors said in flattery of his Oration, we may say in truth of this: 'Tis the delight rather of *a God than a man.* That Soveraign Being, though he were eternally happy in himself, yet as if he had wanted of his complete felicity, whilst he enjoyed it alone, was pleased rather to create, than want objects of his goodness. And a pleasure to which God himself has given such an attestation, as to make a World in order to it, sure cannot, without the most impious contradiction of his choice, be despised by man. And certainly 'tis none of the least of those benefits he hath vouchsafed our nature, that he hath given us a capacity of it, by affording us those powers by which we may advantage and oblige one another; so pointing us out a course, whereby we may not only innocently, but successfully entertain *Lucifer*'s design, of being *like the most High.* It really makes Men what the Heathens vainly fansied their *Heroes*, even *Demi-Gods.* O that those, who think it Noble to be aspiring, would thus verifie the opinion, by terminating all their wishes and endeavours in this one Generous Ambition! and then 'tis sure they would not need to be told the happiness of this so Deifying an employment.

SECT. VII.

Of the Fourth Advantage, that of his Authority.

The Authority which a Gentleman hath over his Relations and Dependents, is of great advantage to him, for to impress Virtue in them;

1. IN the Fourth place we are to consider the *Gentleman*'s advantage, in respect of his *Authority* over those that relate to, or depend on him. And this if rightly managed, is of excellent use, though as capable of being perverted as any of the former. He who has secular ties upon men, may often, by those cords which bind their worldly interest, draw them to a consideration of their spiritual. A *Tenant* who thinks his livelihood concerned in the good Will of his Landlord, a Pensioner whose subsistence rests upon the bounty of his Patron, will strive to model themselves to such a form, as may best suit the inclinations of the person they desire to endear: They are usually Wax to him, that are Flint to others. But then, as variety of Seals make differing Impressions, so this flexibleness of theirs may be either abused to ill, or improved to good; this Wax may receive the Image of a Beast or an Angel. It is therefore the duty of those who are possest of this advantage, to use it to the impressing not of Vice, but Vertue; to contrive how they may most effectually discountenance the one, and encourage the other. And this they may doubtless have frequent opportunities of, towards either of those relations forementioned.

2. But

2. But to none ſo often as to their *Domeſticks* and Menial ſervants. Theſe are always ſo much in their road, that they ſeem to be marked out by God as their moſt peculiar Province. Every Maſter has ſo much of the Prophet, that he is *ſet as a Watchman*, *Ezek.* 3. 17. over his Family, and ought as jealouſly to obſerve the approach of any Vice towards it, as a Centinel does that of an Enemy. 'Tis a very pernicious error for men to think themſelves no other ways concerned in their Servants, than they are in their Horſes or Oxen, to look upon them only as another ſpecies of Working-cattel, and ſo they do their buſineſs, care not how arrant Brutes they be. Whereas they ſhould remember, that they with themſelves are Common-ſervants to the one Great Maſter, and that the ſubordination of the one to the other is but the wiſe *Oeconomy* of their Lord, who has (as in great Families we ſee it uſual) conſtituted the one as Stewards, or Superviſors, to regulate the reſt: And then 'twill appear a piece of enormous unfaithfulneſs to neglect this charge. To avoid which guilt, it will concern *Gentlemen* to have a ſedulous care over thoſe that are thus intruſted to them, to make ſtrict inſpections into the manners of their ſervants, and accordingly to apply inſtructions, and admonitions, reproofs, or incouragements. And that they may not tranſcribe *Pharaohs Tyranny of exacting brick without ſtraw*, require the ſuperſtructure of Chriſtian lives, where there wants the neceſſary foundation of Chriſtian knowledge, they muſt provide that none under their charge be deſtitute of the means of laying that ground-work, of knowing ſo much of Religion as may bring them into an acquaintance with their duty. But to give life to all theſe endeavours 'tis indiſpenſably neceſſary for them to avow ſuch a Love to piety and vertue, and ſuch a Deteſtation of the contrary, that their ſervants may ſee, that there is but one way of approving themſelves both to their earthly and heavenly Maſter.

Specially that which he hath in his Family, and over his Servants and Domeſticks.

3. If it be here Objected, That it is but a counterfeit vertue, which deprives it ſelf from the care of pleaſing men, and ſo that this is, but to teach them to convert profaneneſs to hypocriſie: I muſt yield ſo far as to confeſs, that where that continues the final motive, it will never avail any man. But as God often uſes temporal and outward occurrences, to produce inward and ſpiritual effects, ſo it may here happen, that thoſe whoſe firſt approaches to Goodneſs were mercenary, and out of compliance to others, may by coming within view of it diſcern it ſo amiable, that they may after love it for it ſelf. And indeed conſidering the rude ignorance uſual among the vulgar, 'tis ſcarce imaginable they ſhould imbrace it upon the bare ſtrength of ſpeculation, and therefore muſt be allowed ſecular invitations, as baits to allure them. As for thoſe that never advance higher than the meer *Form of Godlineſs*, what weight ſoever it may add to their own doom, yet perhaps that may juſtly be accounted leſs miſchievous to the world, than the contrary extreme; Hypocriſie being a ſin that cannot well ſet up for *Proſelytes*, becauſe it never owns its ſelf of a diſtinct party from true Piety. And 'tis not impoſſible, that the example of a feigned Chriſtian may teach others to ſurmount their copy, and be that in ſincerity, which he is but in appearance: Whereas open Vice pretends to no ſuch poſſibility, breaths nothing but Contagion, and like a Peſt infects communities. We have therefore reaſon to conclude, that if this care were generally taken, 'twere a ſervice not only to God, but the Commonwealth, which has not more unprofitable, nay noxious burdens lying on her from any rank of men, than from lewd and idle Servants; who uſing their places only as a ſhelter for their ſloth and licentiouſneſs, when that

The profeſſion of Virtue, which may be counterfeit at firſt, may be ſerious afterwards.

Gourd

Gourd withers, know not whither to retire, but uſually either live Beggars, or die Thieves: Whereas if *Gentlemens families* were ſo ordered, as to become Seminaries of Induſtry and Sobriety, the number of them is ſo great, that they might be able to ſend out many Colonies of uſeful and civil perſons.

Gentlemen have an advantage of improving their friendſhip to the moſt noble ends of Religion and Morality;

4. There is alſo another ſort of *Relative*, viz. *a Friend*: Over whom though they have not that Authority, which ſprings from this ſervile ſtock of hopes and fears, yet they have one of a much more noble deſcent, and more vigorous efficacy. Friendſhip has a key to the heart, which it may uſe not only to let it ſelf into its ſecrets, but alſo to introduce its own conceptions, ſentiments, and inclinations; it ſo mixes with the mind, that it may inſenſibly convey into it any *Idea*. Now to uſe this intimacy to the bringing in any thing baſe and unworthy, is the vileſt treachery, ſuch as is but imperfectly repreſented by the treaſon of him, who requites his friends hoſpitality, by bringing in Thieves or Murderers upon him. A guilt ſo vehemently to be abhorred, that none is to think himſelf at a ſufficient and juſt diſtance from it, but he that induſtriouſly purſues the direct contrary; he therefore that hath a *Friend*, ought ſtudiouſly to contrive how he may moſt promote his advantages, and thoſe not only his outward and ſecular, but alſo (yea principally.) his inward and ſpiritual. This is the only ſenſe wherein 'tis lawful to have deſigns upon him, and in this he is not only licenſed, but obliged to have ſo. He muſt here uſe all friendly ſtratagems to recommend and endear vertue to him, make his kindneſs the Vehicle, wherein the more gratefully to adminiſter whatever is moſt wholſom, even reproofs, when they appear ſo; and yet by taking his own turn in being the Patient, evince, that 'tis no aſſuming humor, that creates him a Phyſician. If friendſhips were thus managed, it would be indeed a moſt ſacred relation, ſuch as would be above the violations of thoſe petty trivial diſtaſtes, which now adays diſſolve them. Hearts that are tyed together with theſe conſecrated bands, are like *Man* and *Wife* joyned together inſeparably by God, and much for the ſame end of propagation; only herein as far ſuperior to their pattern, as the mind is to the body, the divine excellencies of a Saint to the natural compoſition of a man. We may reaſonably believe they were Friendſhips of this making, that firſt brought that name into ſo much veneration, and were they again reduced to this, no *Encomiums* could be too laviſh for them. Such a reducement were a work well worthy the ſpirit and ingenuity of *Gentlemen*: Who ſince they generally profeſs much reverence to the word, 'tis pity they ſhould caſt away their adorations on an empty ſhrine. The Heathens had *Incantations* to recal their diſpleaſed Deities into their forſaken Images. I wiſh they would alſo try ſome holy *magick* to bring back ſomewhat of the primitive divine ſpirit, to animate this now liveleſs trunk: That they who juſtly think it an *ungentile* reproachful thing, not to have ſome body whom they call Friend, may think it much more ſo, not to pay all the real kindneſs due to that appellation.

but too many do abuſe their Authority to countenance and throw contempt upon Piety and Virtue:

5. Having thus far given an account what are the proper and juſt employments of this Authority over their ſeveral *Relations*, our method now requires us to reflect a little on their *Practice*, and that in the moſt we ſhall find as far ſwerving from the rule in this particular, as any of the former. So far, alas, are *Gentlemen* from making their Power inſtrumental to the infuſing good, that there is nothing more ordinary than to ſee them diſpoſe it to the direct contrary. The ſcorn and contempt they publickly caſt upon all piety and vertue, teaches their Dependents how dead a trade

that

that is like to prove to them. And then 'tis very improbable that Godlineſs ſhall with them caſt the ſcales againſt Gain. He that aims to get an Exhibition, or any thing proportionable, will ſoon diſcern his way lies in a quite oppoſite road. He muſt find out what Vice of the *Gentleman* he may be moſt ſerviceable to. Sometimes he muſt purvey for his Luſt, ſometimes for his Intemperance; and even when he has cloyed thoſe groſſer appetites, yet his Pride will always remain inſatiable. He muſt ſtill provide air for that *Camelion*, lay out his whole breath in flatteries (a more helliſh wind than any the *Laplanders* ſell.) 'Tis this enſhrining his *Diana* which is the *craft* by which he expects his *wealth:* And therefore whatever other office he executes by ſtarts, a *Paraſite* is to be his conſtant trade.

Servants are commonly made the miniſters of their Luxuries, and their Families the Schools of Vice and Intemperance.

6. In like manner their *Servants* are diſciplin'd to be the Miniſters of their Luxuries, and not only to ſerve but tranſcribe them. The Maſter's Vices ſeldom miſs to be taken up by the whole Houſe, as if they were to be the Cognizances and Badges to witneſs to whom they retained. And though for this they might very well truſt to the efficacy of their bare Example, yet as if they could never be ſecure enough of corrupting their Families, they too often add to it Precepts and Rules of Inſtitution. Thus it is one of the Fundamental Laws of their Hoſpitality, *That no ſtranger be ſent Sober away.* So that their Houſes may well paſs for *inchanted Caſtles*; no Man ſcarce that comes into them, being able to guide himſelf out. They keep, as it were, ſolemn *Juſts* and *Turnaments* of Debauchery, to challenge all comers, and have variety of Champions to deal withal, Combatants of all ranks. In ſhort, *Gentlemens Families* are become ſuch perfect Academies of Licentiouſneſs, that the moſt innocent Puny will there in a very ſhort time become proficient. And this God knows is the ordinary improvement they make of their Authority; as if they affected to outbid the tyranny of the *Turk*, in ſending a Halter to his Vaſſals, and making them their own Executioners; or thought it a diſparagement to their Qualities, to go to Hell without an honourable Retinue.

The friendſhip, which is contracted among them now, becomes a bond of iniquity and combination againſt God and Virtue.

7. As for the other ſort of power, that which they have over their *Friends* and intimates, 'tis not diſcernable that they manage that better. Who almoſt is there, that ſeems at all to advert to the Eſſential part of Friendſhip? What a Rarity, I had almoſt ſaid a Prodigy is it, to find (even amongſt thoſe that profeſs the greateſt dearneſs) any that hath either the Courage to give, or the humility to receive an Admonition? But in ſtead of thoſe *wounds of a Friend*, *Prov.* 27. 6. there is nothing more common among them, than *the kiſſes of an Enemy*, ſuch mutual ſoothing in ill, as renders it inveterate and incurable; and like *Joab* to *Amaſa*, 2 *Sam.* 20. 10. *ſheds out the bowels*, when it pretends to *kiſs*. Nay, as if it were not ſufficient for them to nouriſh thoſe Vices they find already planted, they ſow new Seeds, communicate their perſonal ones to each other, as if the community of Friendſhip obliged them mutually to diffuſe their poiſons. Were many of the cloſeſt intimacies now adays ranſacked to the bottom, it is to be feared this would be found the baſis and ground-work of them. He that hath advanced above the beaten road, arrived to the more elevated myſterious parts of wickedneſs, (*The depths of Satan, as they ſpeak*, *Rev.* 2. 24.) would loſe much of the guſt, if he ſhould not get ſome Confident, to whom at once to boaſt, and propagate his Proficiency. Thus ſacrilegiouſly is this venerable relation of Friendſhip profaned, by being proſtituted to the vileſt and moſt deteſtable purpoſes; and by this accurſed abuſe ſuffers the ſaddeſt *Metamorphoſis*, becomes only a Confederacy in ſin,

a Com-

a Combination and league againſt what they account the common Enemies, God and Vertue.

The great pleaſure and happineſs they would have of being inſtrumental to the good of others, eſpecially of their Souls.

8. Theſe are ſuch wretched perverſions of their power, that one would gueſs it were ſome great and very conſiderable weight of *preſent Intereſt*, that ſhould thus byaſs and diſtort them. But when that is examin'd, 'twill be found to lie wholly on the other ſide. The former Section gave us occaſion to diſcern how tranſporting a delight it is, to be the Inſtrument of any good to others. But as there is no good can bear proportion with that which is done to the Soul, ſo certainly to be an Agent in that, muſt far tranſcend the pleaſure of all other Benefactions. He that ſo diſpenſes his Bounty, as to engage men to Vertue by it, is indeed the magnificent Perſon, out-vies the moſt profuſe Donations of the greateſt Potentates. They can give but ſome little parcels of Earth, he gives Heaven, and like a mighty Monarch hath Kings to do him homage. So he that by well ordering his Family, makes his Servants to be God's, does not only oblige the Common-wealth, but is as it were a Patriot even to Heaven it ſelf; provides it with Inhabitants, and helps to ſecure it from that emptineſs and depopulation, wherewith the general wickedneſs of men ſeems to threaten it. And then in relation to ſuch his Servants, he is of all other Maſters the moſt bountiful and obliging: They provide perhaps ſome petty Annuities, he gives a ſtate of Inheritance, nay of Eternity.

Gentlemenly doing good may Enrich others without Impoveriſhing themſelves:

9. This is a vaſt Munificence, yet that which the arranteſt Worlding can have no temptation to grudge. A man may thus without a Riddle give much, yet part with nothing, nay, acquire that very thing to himſelf, which he diſpenſes to others. So that here is no place for the uſual (though unjuſt) Objection of *impoveriſhing ones ſelf*, which is that alone which often deads the reliſh, or diverts the attempt of other Liberalities. And therefore this ſort which is refcued from that one poſſible allay, muſt certainly yield the moſt vigorous and unmixt Pleaſure: It being ſure, that Bounty has in it ſelf ſo much of agreement with Humane Nature, as will inevitably produce Complacence and Delight, where it is not ſo interrupted or allayed.

By this means their Servants and Dependents will become more truſty and faithful in the management of their concerns.

10. I might here add *ex abundanti*, that there is likewiſe a *Secular Profit* attending it. For if *Gentlemen* had their Dependents truly Conſcientious, they would be of very much more uſe to them. They might employ them ſecurely, and need no other Spies upon them but their own Conſciences. 'Twould not then be, ſo many Servants ſo many Thieves and Harpyes, but ſo many Factors and Traffickers for the Maſters advantages. So that here again their own intereſt engages them to this Care: Though I confeſs 'tis to be wiſhed, that the former more ingenuous Motive may be ſo prevalent, as to ſuperſede all uſe of this; it being very unreaſonable that God ſhould need Auxiliaries from *Mammon*. Yet as once the *Iſraelites borrowed of the Ægyptians*, ſo it may not be amiſs to make this Inferior conſideration a ſtep to the other more Noble: That even they who have yet no guſt of that more Heroick Pleaſure, may on the intuition of this Worldly Advantage, endeavour to improve their Authority to the Spiritual good of all that belong to them.

The pleaſure of doing good to a Friend is equal to that which we receiv'd, or do to our Selves.

11. But from no part of this Performance may they reap ſo rich ſatisfaction, as from that which is exerciſed towards a *Friend*. For as their concernment is nearer in him, than in the former more diſtant Relations, ſo the Pleaſure of doing good to him, muſt proportionably encreaſe; as that heat is moſt intenſe which is conveyed by the neareſt Reflection. He who ſo maintains his Vital ſtation in the great Body, as to ſympathize with every

every Member of it, must yet necessarily have the most acute sense of what befals those parts, to which he is most immediately conjoyned. But there is no stricter Union upon Earth, than that of a Virtuous *Friendship*; and then what can be more satisfactory, than to preserve or advance the Health of that, whose Maladies himself is sure to feel, to improve and benefit that person, who is thus become a part of him? Persons of quality love to deck and imbellish the place where they inhabit, abhor to dwell in a Stie or Dungeon: But friends dwell in each other; and therefore cannot but be delighted in beautifying and adorning those Minds they have thus chosen to live in, in purging them from all foulness and pollutions, and rendring them as pure and immaculate; nay, as splendid and illustrious, as is possible. Certainly, there is nothing upon Earth more ravishing, than a *Friendship* thus entertained. 'Tis some Anticipation of Heaven, where those lines of love, which stretch themselves to every part of the Circumference, do all meet in God as their Centre. It is indeed that which surmounts the possibility of an exact description, and reserves its full discovery to be the prize of Experience. Let it be tried, and then I doubt not, but he that hath made the Experiment will readily attest the pleasure of thus employing this part also of his Authority.

SECT. VIII.

Of the Last Advantage, that of Reputation.

1. THE last Advantage is that of *Reputation* and *Esteem*: Which is generally presumed the due of persons of Quality, unless where some personal unworthiness hath cut off the Entail, and forfeited that right. And though these days have taught the Vulgar to defalk much of that respect which former Ages paid to Superiors of all sorts; yet I cannot think the *Levelling Principle* has so universally diffused it self, as totally to raise out all Impressions of Reverence towards them: So that there still remains somewhat of this Talent for them to negotiate with. It will be their part so to manage and dispose it, as to bring in profit to their Lord, by making it also an Engine to draw men to piety and virtue.

The Reputation of a Gentleman well manag'd is of great advantage to him.

2. This they may sometime do by *Counsel*; to the success whereof there is nothing more contributive than an esteem of the Adviser, most men being rather apt to consider who speaks, than what is spoken. And therefore persons, whose Quality and Education have prepossest them with an opinion of their Wisdom, have a great advantage towards the working on them. And this it will befit them to make diligent use of, by seasonable advices and exhortations of those whom they shall discern thus prepared for the entertaining of them, to take all prudent occasions to recommend *Christian Practice* to them, and by pulling off those disguises which the false measures of the World have put upon Vice and Virtue, to represent them in their true and native shapes, the one the object of horror and detestation, the other of love and delight. 'Tis the want of this discovery, that has given Impiety so free a range: It has dress it self up in a counterfeit splendour, false Gems and Tinsel-gaudery: And in this glittering appearance it marches on triumphantly, receives acclamations, yea, and Obeisance too, nay commands not only the knees, (as every prosperous Usurper can do) but even the hearts of men. And will none have so much Charity, so much Zeal for publick Concern, as to uncloak

The advice given by a Gentleman carries more weight and Reputation along with it, than that which comes from a meaner person;

this Impoſtor, and ſhew the dazled World what it is it thus bows to? Perhaps this is lookt upon only as the buſineſs of Divines; but certainly would *Gentlemen* alſo ſet to it, they were like to prove the more proſperous undertakers. What comes only out of the Pulpit, paſſes for *the foolishneſs of Preaching*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. or for the diſcourſes of thoſe whoſe Trade it is to inveigh againſt ſin. All their *Thruſts* being of courſe, and expected, their *Wards* are as well known too; and we daily ſee Vice approve it ſelf an expert Fencer againſt them. But the endeavours of theſe would not be liable to thoſe prejudices: A blow from them would come (like the revolt of a Confederate) with the advantage of a Surpriſe. And there is little doubt, but by friendly and familiar Conferences they might many times inſinuate that into mens breaſts, which the more ſolemn and Authoritative Exhortations of Miniſters often fail of.

Specially if he ſeconds and confirms it by his own virtuous Example.

3. But Counſel will be of little efficacy, if it be not ſeconded by *Example*. They muſt therefore look their Lives be ſuch, as may ſhew they believe themſelves, whilſt they go about to perſwade others. He that ſhall with never ſo preſſing arguments dehort a man from that Sin, which himſelf at the next opportunity commits, will never be ſuppoſed to have any real ill opinion of it, but rather ſo paſſionate a love, that he is jealous any but himſelf ſhould have its embraces. And then ſurely this will be ſo far from averting, that it will excite the appetite of the other to taſte of that which he ſees is thought ſo deſirable as to be Monopolized.

Gentlemen have a great advantage to draw their Dependents to the love of Virtue and Goodneſs by their countenance and encouragement;

4. Indeed there is nothing by which they have ſo univerſal *an influence*, as their Example. Things that are ſet in ſome high and eminent place, do naturally attract mens eyes to them, ſo that eminency of condition wherein *Gentlemen* are placed, renders their actions more obſervable. They are like the *City* our Saviour ſpeaks of, *ſet on an hill*, and have by that advantageous ſituation the means of making their *light ſhine farther* than other mens. And therefore it ought to be their conſtant care, by the bright luſtre of their exact and exemplary Converſations, to enlighten the whole ſphere wherein they move. Would *Gentlemen* make this their united deſign, what a happy Conſtellation of auſpicious Stars would they prove, by whoſe benign Aſpect the ſterility of Vulgar minds might be cured, and even thoſe Clods be inſpirited and rendred capable of excellent productions?

which would give virtue a much greater Reputation among their Inferiors.

5. For what can be more *perſwaſive* to thoſe of the lower Ranks to embrace Vertue, than to ſee it made the election of thoſe whom they ſuppoſe to have moſt judgment to diſcern its value, and ſo fall not on it blindfold, and who have alſo all the contrary pleaſures of Sin within their reach; nay proſtrate at their feet, ſuing for entertainment, and ſo are not caſt on it by impotence? What a blur and infamy would it caſt upon Vice, if it were once baniſhed out of *Gentile* company? And how fair a ſtep would it be towards its excluſion out of all? We ſee what a natural aſpiring the lower ſort have to approach to the condition of their Betters. And though that being now aimed only at their Pomps and Greatneſs, be no commendable temper, yet ſure it were much in the power of thoſe emulated perſons to make it ſo. For would they ſo order the matter, that their Vertue ſhould out-ſhine all their outward ſplendors, that it ſhould become the character and diſtinctive note of a *Gentleman*, to be eminently good, this were a way to conſecrate even Ambition it ſelf, by making it an engine not to rack and torture men, as common ambitions do, but to advance them to all vertuous induſtry.

6. He

6. He that desired to ennoble his Family, would then begin at his Mind, cast out thence all base and degenerous Inclinations, and make himself a *Gentleman* without help of Heraldry. Thus haply might they deceive men into Piety, and make those Emulations, whose first rise was meerly from Earth, a ladder wherewith to scale Heaven. And how noble, how excellent a charity is this, and yet of all others the cheapest, it having that Proverbial property of Charity, *To begin at home!* The being good, is primarily a kindness to themselves, and to others only by way of result, and propagation, and easie consequence. How unchristian, unmanly, yea unskilful too will it then be, to deny this benefaction, which has that very argument on its side, which is opposed to other kinds of Liberalities? That fear of lessening a mans self, which in those contracts and shuts up the bowels, is here in all reason to enlarge and dilate them; for in this case men cannot deny, without their own greatest injury, and diminution. And sure 'twould justly pass for a prodigy both of malice and folly, for one so to avert the benefiting another, as to incur the greatest damage to himself in avoiding it.

The abandoning of vice would truly ennoble and make them Gentlemen in deed.

7. But alas, it is not only Charity either to others or themselves, which exacts of them thus to promote Piety among men. They have brought themselves under another more constraining obligation, I mean that of *Justice*, particularly the justice of *Restitution*: For 'tis too visible they have been deeply accessary to its decay. So far have they been from advising and exciting men to good, that I fear their perswasive faculties have generally been employed to a quite distant purpose. There are few or none, that by their own pious endeavous do at all abate the need of the Priests exhortations; but many that do evacuate their efficacy, by decrying it as the greatest folly, the most unmanly submission, to yield them any consideration. As for their own Counsels, they are too often in earnest, what *Solomon*'s was by way of Irony, *Eccl.* 11. 9. *Walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes*, encouraging and animating men to all Sensuality. And if they discern any begin to startle at the course, to entertain but a sober thought of that dismal end to which it leads; he is to be laught out of that *Hypochondriack fit*, taught to look upon it as a spice of Frensie. The loud noise of roaring Mirth is re-inforced to drown that poor whisper of Conscience; and by the sound as it were of those Trumpets he is incited to turn to his course, as the horse *rusheth into the battel*, *Jer.* 8. 6. all arts of encouragement used to embolden him to run fearlesly on to Damnation. This is their own known *Recipe* ----- for all pangs and gripes of Soul. And if it be not of every days practice, 'tis not, that they have any better method of Cure, but such arts of prevention, such means of stupefaction and obduration, that the disease seldom occurs among them.

Gentlemen abuse their Reputation, in giving vice greater credit and encouragement than otherwise it would have;

8. Nor do they omit to back and fortifie this with proportionable *Examples*: Which God knows are so many and so efficacious, that like a dismal Cloud they overspread our whole Horizon. They who are by God designed as lights to illuminate all about them, have been the instruments of introducing a more than *Ægyptian* darkness, thereby exemplifying that Aphorism of our Saviours, *Mat.* 6. 23. *If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

which they likewise confirm by their own evil example.

9. What a deluge of Profaneness and Impiety at this day overflows this poor Nation, is too visible not only by the direct, but the reflexed beams, those sad Judgments they have brought down upon it. And though there be too many springs which feed this Ocean, yet there will scarce any

Gentlemen are grown publickly vicious, and countenance profaeness in an open and scandalous manner;

any be found to have more liberally contributed, than the open and ſcandalous viciouſneſs of the *Gentry*. They who are placed as Stars in our Firmament, if they dart nothing but malignant Influences, what wonder is it, if an univerſal Peſt enſue? 'Tis they that have brought Vice into countenance, made it the mode and faſhion of the times, ſo that People dread the ſingularity of being innocent, and a Man may with leſs peril of ſcorn appear in the moſt ſuperannuated dreſs, than own the Obſolete qualities of Meekneſs, Purity, Sobriety, *&c.* How great and fatal a ſnare this *creditableneſs* of ſin has proved, I fear there are too many thouſands of entangled Souls can witneſs. And on whom can they more properly charge their ruine, than on thoſe who have advanced it to this repute in the World? Mens natural pravity gives them propenſion more than enough to ill; and therefore it hath been the buſineſs of Laws both humane and divine to put a bridle upon thoſe inclinations, by fear and ſhame to reſtrain their inordinacy: But this converts the bridle into a ſpur, when thoſe that ſhould diſcountenance Vice, thus animate and encourage it,

which is a great Temptation for the common people to Imitate, and grow like them.

10. For what a Temptation is it to the vulgar *to run to all exceſs of Riot*, when they ſee their ſuperiors have beaten the path before them, and are themſelves immerſt in the moſt brutiſh ſenſualities? Which of them will endure to be ſober, when Drunkenneſs ſhall be accounted ſo dignifying a quality, that it may make a Peaſant company for a Lord? When *Gentlemen* are Atheiſtical, Clowns will think themſelves very modeſtly wicked, if they be but profane. And when they hear their Betters diſcharge loud Volleys of Oaths, they will ſoon find they are as well qualified for that part of greatneſs as the beſt. *Their Tongues* are as much *their own*, *Pſal.* 12. 4. and will be glad that by ſuch an eaſie imployment of them they can be *Gentlemen* ſo good cheap. 'Twere as endleſs as unneceſſary to enumerate the ſeveral ſorts of infection, which the ill examples of great Men have diffuſed. 'Tis too obvious in the moral effects to need any other way of diſcovery. And I am ſure it ought to be matter of the ſaddeſt reflection to all who are involved in that guilt; it being a moſt direful account which they will one day have to make, who have been the Authors of ſuch miſerable vaſtations, turned Communities of Men, of Chriſtians, into Herds of Beaſts, nay into Legions of Devils.

The ſins of great Men receive a mighty aggravation from the Number of thoſe that are miſled by their example,

11. Every ſin even of the privateſt obſcureſt perſon carries much of contempt and affront to the Divine Majeſty: But great Mens vices are of a yet more giantly frame, they proclaim ſolemn War with Heaven, levy forces and draw in Multitudes of abettors and confederates in their hoſtilities. And God knows this kind of Unevangelical *violence* the *kingdom of Heaven daily ſuffers*. Oh that the Chieftains and Leaders of theſe unhappy troops, would at laſt think fit to ſound a retreat; that they would, in pity if not to themſelves, yet to their ſeduced followers, ceaſe thus deſperately to ruſh on upon the mouth of the Cannon, the Jaws of Hell! And not only ſo, but that they would alſo endeavour to bring them into ſome terms of accord with that omnipotent Enemy they have provoked; by their own penitent and reformed lives teach them the poſtures of humility and ſubmiſſion, as they have formerly done that of defiance. This certainly is that to which common equity obliges them, reparation of injuries being confeſſedly an indiſpenſable part of juſtice. And certainly there can no injury exceed, nay equal this of betraying Men to eternal ruine: And conſequently nothing leſs than the utmoſt induſtry to repair it can be any competent expiation. God grant all thoſe, whoſe guilt gives them a peculiar title to this admonition, may own their right to it by a particular and ſeri-

ous

ous application, ſuch as may for the future engage them to the moſt zealous endeavour of reforming not only themſelves, but others, for reſcuing their reputation from that fouleſt blot of being an agent for Satan, and advancing it to that higheſt dignity of being ſerviceable to God.

who, for the moſt part, take wrong meaſures of Honour and Gallantry,

12. But there is little hope they will rightly conſider the uſe, who are ſo utterly miſtaken in the nature of true reputation. A *man of Honour* is now underſtood only to be one that can ſtart and maintain a Quarrel, that for every the triflingeſt injury expects like *Lamech*, *Gen.* 4. 24. to be *avenged ſeventy and ſeven fold*; that deſpiſes the Chriſtian precepts of Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, and Forgiveneſs, as rudiments of cowardiſe and unmanly puſillanimity, and has no other meaſure of courage and gallantry, but by an utter oppoſition to all thoſe. And whileſt *reputation* is thus hung only at the point of the ſword, 'tis a very fit inſtrument to deſtroy bodies, but ſure not to ſave Souls. We find daily many occaſions to complain of the Tyranny of Cuſtom and Opinion, but ſcarce any where ſo much as in thoſe unjuſt and abſurd Laws they have impoſed in this matter: Which were they conſideringly weighed would ſurely evince them ſuch contemptible Legiſlators, as would be enough to dethrone and depoſe them from that uſurped Empire they now maintain in the World.

and ſuch as are contrary to the Rules and Precepts of the Goſpel,

13. To take only a ſhort and curſory view of them, we ſhall in the firſt place find them to be horribly impious. For what can be more ſo, than thus to tear off thoſe ſignatures of Honour, which God himſelf hath impreſt, and vilifie thoſe whom he hath dignified? God has pronounced that it is the *diſcretion of a man that deferreth his anger, and* it is *his glory to paſs over a tranſgreſſion*, *Prov.* 19. 11. And again, *He that is ſlow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a City*, *Prov.* 16. 32. But this new notion of Honour proclaims the quite contrary; he paſſes for a Phlegmatick fool, whoſe bloud boils not at the firſt glimpſe of an Affront; and 'tis Gallantry to offer many Injuries, but ignominious Tameneſs to bear one. It has always been the indiſputable prerogative of *Kings* to be the *Fountains of Honour*; what an impious daring is it then to diveſt him of that priviledge, *by whom Kings reign?* To cancel his Patents, and mark them out as the objects of ſcorn, to whom God gives ſo glorious a teſtimony? Yet thus is it daily done to the Men, whom the *King of Kings will honour*; theſe are all the Triumphs theſe *Mordecai*'s muſt expect; an evidence how much worſe they are than *Haman*, that allot them. Certainly there cannot be an act of greater defiance againſt the Divine Majeſty than thus to reverſe his Decrees. And upon this hoſtility and oppoſition againſt Heaven it is, that all the *private Quarrels*, and Combats on Earth are (as on their foundation) ſuperſtructed; ſo that to initiate a Duelliſt, his firſt *Challenge* muſt be directed againſt God himſelf.

and oppoſite to common prudence and ordinary Diſcretion, as is particularly notorious in the caſe of Duels.

14. Nor are theſe falſe meaſures of Honour more oppoſite to Religion, than Prudence. The gloſſes the *Sword-men* have put upon the one fundamental Law of *Not bearing an Injury*, have introduced ſuch a multitude of ridiculous Punctilio's, that the next Age will be in danger of receiving the Fable of *Don Quixot* for Authentick Hiſtory. And I ſee not with what juſtice this can laugh at them in him and his Squire *Sancho*, and yet think them ſerious enough to govern Men in their moſt real and weighty concernments. It would indeed aſtoniſh any ſober perſon to conſider, what *Chimæra*'s they are, to which Men ſacrifice all that ought to be dear to them. How many *Duels* have been fought, how many Men kill'd, (when neither of the combatants were ſo implacable but that they could willingly have compounded the matter) only becauſe they thought point of Honour

nour exacted it, and the declaring it would be inglorious? Certainly the Gallies is a ſtate of perfect liberty, compared with this bondage. And were the Releaſe from thoſe neceſſarily to infer a ſubjection to this, were thoſe Slaves obliged thus to become *Gentlemen*, I ſhould ceaſe my wonder why ſo many of them have deſpiſed a manumiſſion. For thus to have a Man's Eſtate, his Life, yea Soul too, at the mercy of Popular breath, (not only to be loſt, but loſt by his own act) is a ſlavery beyond all that the moſt abject creature ever groan'd under. And yet ſo prodigiouſly abſurd is the World, as to cut this out for the *Benjamin's portion*, make it the eſpecial and peculiar priviledge of *Gentlemen*. They are ſet upon a Theatre, and as the *Gladiators* of old muſt kill one another, only to entertain Spectators. And who would not think *Bedlam* the only Seminary to breed Men up for ſuch a Trade? Yet ſo univerſal is this Lunacy, that one may ſuſpect the Inſtitution of that Hoſpital is perverted, that that incloſes only the Sober perſons, whileſt the Frantick run looſe about the World.

The great Sin and miſchievous Effects of fighting Duels,

15. But perhaps the more Malicious *Duellers* will think themſelves exempt from this number, becauſe 'tis their own ſatisfaction which they deſign in it: Their Enemies bloud will make ſo delicious a Draught for their Revenge, that they gaſp after it, and think it a pleaſure well worthy their purſuit. But ſure theſe differ from the former, not as Wiſe men from Fools, but as a worſe Natured Fool from a better. He that would juſtifie the rationalneſs of any Adventure, muſt prove the Prize at leaſt to equal the worth of that he hazards for it. But who that conſiders he has a Soul, can ſeriouſly ſet it at ſo contemptible a rate? Or what Man in his wits, that believes a Hell, will ſay the pleaſure of a Revenge can countervail thoſe pains? Nay indeed, none can with any pretence put it in balance with the meer loſs of Life. For he that is kill'd (as every Man may be that fights) can have no ſenſe of that pleaſure, and ſo becomes uncapable of the compenſation, if that were able to make it. Nay, I ſhall deſcend yet lower, and with ſome confidence affirm that the uneaſie conſequences even of the victory do quite overwhelm the ſatisfaction. For this I dare refer my ſelf to any of thoſe who have had the unhappy Triumph of a *Murderer*, and doubt not that if they will ſpeak their experiences, they will tell us that the cry of their Adverſaries bloud in their Conſcience, did utterly extinguiſh the reliſh of it in their Fancy. Or if they were perſons that were hardned againſt all ſenſe of Divine vengeance, yet the fear of Humane was abundantly enough to defeat them of that pleaſure they expected: So impoſſible is it to *gather Grapes of* theſe *Thorns*, to reap any contentment from ſo unchriſtian an attempt. Their Revenge is not compleated without Bloud: And if they have it, it proves a Torrent to carry away that imaginary Delight they projected from it. And then what colour of reaſon can any Man bring why he ſhould thus *ſell his Soul for nought*, and become a *Platonick* to Damnation?

which gratifies only for the preſent a furious and revengeful Paſſion.

16. But *Revenge* has two ill-matcht qualities, Blindneſs and Impetuoſity; and ſo all its darts, though they carry force and venome enough to deſtroy all about them, yet by being ill aimed revert mortally on the breaſt whence they were ſhot. Certainly there is not in the World a more prodigious Infatuation, than that which rules in this affair. What can be more ſenceleſs, than for me, when a Man has done me an Injury, to think to wipe off that by expoſing my ſelf to more? When he has given me the Lye, to invite him to give me the Stab too? Did ever any man attempt to make up a breach by widening it? To cloſe his wound by tearing it further? The Phyſicians indeed talk of a method of curing ſome Diſeaſes by

Majoration:

Majoration: But ſure Injuries are not in the number of thoſe maladies, not capable of that way of remedy. The greater may, 'tis poſſible, overwhelm, but not cure the leſs, as the more moderate Pains become inſenſible by the ſuperveniency of the more acute. Yet I preſume none will applaud his choice, that ſhould call for the Rack to drown the pain of a cut finger, which yet is no hyperbolical Emblem of this ſort of Revenge.

17. But beſides all this, our *modern Gallantry* is treacherous to it ſelf, confutes its own pretenſion, and whileſt it vainly aſſumes the Monopoly of Courage, is indeed the meaneſt Cowardiſe in the World. That by which we uſe to diſcriminate baſe fear from juſt caution, is the formidableneſs of the object feared. No Man is reproached for not ſtanding the inundation of the Sea; but to quake at ſtepping over a Gutter, would be a ridiculous timorouſneſs. 'Twould be neither wonder nor ſhame to run from the purſuit of a Lion; but to be chaſed by a barking Whelp, is the property of an Hare, not of a Man. And according to this meaſure, what wretched Cowards are our greateſt *Hectors*? For what can be more contemptible than thoſe unjuſt Scorns of Men they ſo tremble at? Which if they were ſure to be univerſal, yet what real ill can they do a Man, who does not by his own fancy lend them an edge wherewith to wound him? But neither can this be the Caſe, till all both Chriſtianity and Sobriety be quite worn out of the World. For to a Chriſtian, 'tis certain the irreligion of fighting a Duel would be the moſt infamous thing, and even to a ſober Heathen the folly of it would be ſo too: So that he can be in no danger of either of their Reproaches, for declining it. And when theſe are ſet aſide, who is there whoſe cenſure can be at all conſiderable? Yet this ſo pitiful deſpicable thing is it, which ſo terrifies and amazes them. And how ſhall we define Cowardiſe, if this be not it? *There is a great deal of cowardiſe in the ſeeming courage and gallantry of our Duelliſts.*

18. And as it has the nature, ſo has it the Fate of it too, which uſually is by fleeing an imaginary danger, to fall into a real. Men fight, that they may not be thought Cowards; and by fighting they do not only become indeed ſo, but alſo ruſh themſelves upon other far more formidable miſchiefs, run from a Scarcrow into a *Precipice*. And now what a Riddle is this thing they call *Gallantry*, which ſo ſtartles at the weakeſt noiſe, yet ſtands undauntedly the ſtroke of a Thunderbolt? They who ſo dread the reproach of vain impotent Men, do yet confidently encounter the anger of the omnipotent God; and if Valour and Fool-hardineſs were not very diſtant things, would confute my whole argument by making it evident, that they dare be damned. Thus by a ſtrange kind of inverted operation their Fear makes them bold: Would God that *Antiperiſtaſis* might go on to work, till that Boldneſs have again brought them to a fear, I mean that penitential Fear, proper to thoſe who thus deliberately provoke the Divine Majeſty. *and no leſs the danger, upon which they run themſelves, by their fool-hardineſs.*

19. And that very *Deliberation* is a circumſtance of ſo great an enhanſement, as unmeaſurably heightens the ſin. Sudden acts may be capable of ſome alleviations by the ſurpriſe they make on a Man's ſpirit: But contrived and premeditated Crimes can have no milder appearance than of obſtinate Rebellion. And this aggravation can ſcarce ever be wanting to a *Duel*; many hours, if not days intervening between the Deſignment and the Execution. And in that interval 'tis not poſſible for all the Opiate Receipts in Satan's Diſpenſatory to keep the Conſcience ſo drowſie, that it ſhall not ſtartle, but it will undoubtedly repreſent to a Man the horror of that he is going about: Which is no leſs than the engaging himſelf in a double Murder, his own, and his Adverſaries. For the wilful hazard of both *The ſin of Duelling receives a very great aggravation from the deliberation wherewith oft-times it is accompanied:*

both faſten on him the guilt, though both happen to ſurvive the Combate. But if it be his own fate to fall (as he has much reaſon to expect, who thus puts himſelf out of God's protection, nay dares his vengeance) what poſſible hope can remain for him, who thus dies in that very act of the greateſt ſin? We are generally apt to think but uncomfortably of thoſe who *make away* themſelves: But certainly many of thoſe deſerve to be Canonized, in compariſon with a Man that dies in *Duel*; the Principle of that being often an exceſſive Fear of God, which ſure is leſs culpable, than a profane contempt of him. Beſides, the temptation in that caſe is uſually more violent and impetuous; it being (if not begot, yet) cheriſht and fomented by Melancholy, the moſt untractable and obſtinate of all humors: Whereas the ſuggeſtion to this hath no ſuch Auxiliary to aid it, the original of Quarrels being frequently from too free a Jollity. And laſtly, that, of how heinous a kind ſoever, is yet but a ſingle ſin, whereas this, as I ſaid before, involves a twofold guilt. And of how crimſon a colour muſt that ſoul appear before God's Tribunal that is thus double-dyed in Bloud!

And ſo doth the danger, from that little Time which they have to Repent in, who are commonly cut off in the very act and moment they are guilty of this ſin.

20. And now who can chuſe but cry out in the Prophet *Eſay*'s ſtile, *Hear O Heavens, and hearken O Earth?* What ſtrain of wonder and amazement can bear proportion with the deſperate madneſs of Men, that can thus knowingly and conſideringly ruſh themſelves upon ſuch unſpeakable miſchiefs? Eſpecially ſince here they want even that miſerable Reſerve, which ſerves to embolden them to other ſins, *viz.* the hope of a future repentance. For thoſe that make but the ſlighteſt meaſures of that, can ſcarce fanſie any opportunities of it in this caſe: Since to him that dies, there ſeldom remains any ſpace of interval between his ſin and his death, no time for thoſe clouds to gather, thoſe penitential ſhowres to deſcend, which ſhould waſh away his bloud-guiltineſs; or if there did, yet what expectation is there he ſhould imploy it to any effect? Such preſumptuous conſiderate ſins naturally work an obduration in the heart, which nothing but an extraordinary grace can remove; and after ſuch an high and daring provocation; 'tis very reaſonable to expect God ſhould withdraw even the loweſt degrees, but ſure not that he ſhould add higher.

'Tis heartily wiſh'd that this barbarous cuſtom were wholly forgot and laid aſide.

21. Theſe Conſiderations are all of them ſo obvious, that they naturally ſuggeſt themſelves. And certainly they are ſo weighty and preſſing, that 'tis a Prodigy to ſee they ſhould be ſo univerſally ineffectual: Which can proceed from nothing but the want of cloſe and ſerious application. Would Men dare but to meet ſingle with their own ſober thoughts, 'twould certainly ſuperſede all other *Duels*. There remains therefore nothing for me to add, but to invite them to this one Encounter, to beſeech them to grapple a-while but with the force of Reaſon, a Combate of all others the ſecureſt, where to be ſubdued is more glorious than to conquer in any other: And when it has deſpoiled them of that falſe courage, which expoſes them to ſuch diſmal ruines, to permit it to re-inſpirit them with a true one, ſuch as may give them daring enough to ſtand up againſt this ſo more than Barbarous a cuſtom; to endeavour to baniſh it out of *Chriſtendom*, and ſo take off that Reproach which our profeſſion lies under from ſo impious a practice, which having no other Tenure but Preſcription, there needs nothing but Deſuetude to deſtroy it. Let every Man for his own part ſtrictly abſtain from it, and avow the doing ſo, and then by ceaſing to be a Faſhion, it will ceaſe to be at all.

There are but a few that have the courage to begin and ſet the example.

22. But the miſery of it is, no Man will aſſume to be *leader* in this ſo noble an Enterpriſe, to begin this ſo neceſſary a Reformation: Which though it have ſo much more of compliance even to carnal Intereſts, than

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its contrary, that I doubt not many wiſh it were univerſal; yet till it be ſo, they think 'twill be uncreditable to any particular perſon. But were that the certain event of it, 'tis ſure that reproach ought to be deſpiſed, when it comes in competition with Duty. In this caſe the reſolution of *David* (as great a *Sword-man* as any of them) is moſt proper; *I will yet be more vile than thus*, 2 *Sam.* 6. 22. And certainly a man cannot paſs a more glorious Martyrdom, than to ſuffer ignominy upon ſuch an account. I am ſure 'tis a real ſhame to ſee that Men can offer violence to all their deareſt complicated Intereſts to comply with that unchriſtian cuſtom, yet cannot croſs a ſingle imaginary one, to ſuppreſs it.

23. Nay the truth is, they create Punctilio's in this caſe, by which themſelves will not be govern'd in any other. In a common *Fire* does any Man ſuſpend his own endeavours, till he ſee the whole Town running to quench the flame? Or if one of theſe popular perſons had been of the *Philiſtines* company, *when the houſe began to fall*, *Judg.* 16.30. would he have ſo dreaded the ſingularity of a ſolitary eſcape, as not to have attempted it, till ſhoals of others had led the way? We have had ſome experience, under what prejudice a *publick Act* falls, that is by its makers precluded from being a precedent. And ſure theſe Men do tacitly (yet very intelligibly) accuſe the unreaſonableneſs of this fear, whilſt they confine it to this ſingle inſtance. And methinks 'twere but juſt, they ſhould be required to be conſentaneous to themſelves, and act in other things by the ſame meaſures; which would prove ſo ſharp a penance as were more likely to reduce them to ſobriety, than all the force of Argument.

Men ought to decline Duels out of Conſcience rather than Cowardiſe.

24. But beſides this ſevere Remedy, there is ſure an *Antidote* againſt this *Malady*, a way to ſeparate the Duty from the Contempt which their fancies have ſo cloſely annext to it: And that is by making their lives ſo uniformly Chriſtian, that it may be evident, 'tis Conſcience, not Fear that works with them. Without this I know indeed no ſecurity from reproach. For to ſee a Man, who tramples upon all other commands of God, catch up this, as a Buckler againſt a Challenger, who can be ſo blindly charitable, as to impute this to any thing but Cowardiſe? But when the whole tract of a Man's life is one continued courſe of Obedience, no Man will expect he ſhould violate that upon this occaſion. To this may be added a chearful and free expoſing himſelf to all warrantable dangers, when any publick occaſion of hazard is offered: If he then ſhew himſelf daring; 'twill be apparent, that 'tis not the fear of Death, but Sin, which locks up his Sword from private *Duels*. Or when there is no opportunity of this active valour, let him approve his paſſive by a contented, nay joyful ſubmiſſion to any ſuffering, that attends the diſcharge of a good Conſcience: And of this there is little fear (in theſe days eſpecially) to want occaſions. He that does this, will be in no danger to be defamed for declining *Duels*: But on the contrary ſuch an equable piety will extort reverence from all; there being ſuch a venerable amability in it, that the moſt profane do even againſt their wills bear it ſome inward reſpect.

25. Let not Men therefore pretend the *Fear of Reproach*, as an excuſe, ſince here is ſo ready a *Salvo* for that objection: But let them by an aſſiduous practice of all other Chriſtian Virtues, render this alſo ſecure to them, and qualifie themſelves for the propagating it to others. And Oh, that we could once ſee all other quarrels amongſt *Gentlemen* converted into this one holy contention, who ſhould be forwardeſt in this Heroick attempt. 'Tis the falſe notion of Honour, that is one of Satan's principal Citadels, like *Zion* to the *Jebuſites*: And the aſſaulting of that would be

an atchievement of ſo much glory, that he that could proſper in it, might juſtly challenge the dignity which *David* there promiſes, 2 *Sam.* 5. 8. *of being Chief and Captain.* Here then they may lawfully quench their thirſt of Honour, yea and that of Revenge too, by wrecking their utmoſt malice on this their ſo grand Enemy. Let it be remembred how long it hath befooled and cheated the World, and be expoſed to all the ſhames and deteſtation of a diſcovered Impoſtor. Nay, let it be brought to a ſolemn Arraignment, thoſe innumerable Murders, of which it has been guilty, charged on it, and proſecuted to death, ſo utterly extinguiſhed, that it may never again appear in the World, whilſt all good men applaud the juſtice, and ſay, *So let all thine enemies periſh, O Lord.*

A great pleaſure in being Inſtrumental to draw men off from ſin, and bring them to Repentance.

26. Having thus reflected on the common *Abuſes* of *Reputation*, all that remains is to conſider how injurious men are to themſelves in their ill managery of this Talent, which might be improved not only to their final account, but even their preſent pleaſure. For firſt, he that by ſeaſonable advice reſcues any man from a courſe of ſin, will infallibly feel ſo unutterable a complacency in having done ſo, that he will find he was kind to himſelf, as well as the other, and will have no temptation to think himſelf unprofitably imployed, though that were to be his only Reward. This bringing ſinners to repentance is ſo noble, ſo tempting a deſign, that it drew even God himſelf from Heaven to proſecute it; and that not by cheap and eaſie means, but by all thoſe Sufferings, which humane Nature moſt trembles at: Yet ſuch was *the joy* of Man's ſalvation, which was *ſet before him*, as enabled him to *endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame*, *Heb.* 12. 2. How rich a bargain will it then be to a man to partake with him in that joy, to ſhare with him in that prize, upon ſo much eaſier terms, to pay but a little breath for that which exhauſted his bloud, and to become (in a lower inferior ſence) a Saviour without a Croſs?

The great happineſs of encouraging men to Virtue and Piety, by ſetting a good Example.

27. In like manner he that by a ſtrict and exemplary converſation ſets himſelf up a *landmark* to direct men in this turbulent and dangerous *Sea*, his light, 'tis true, goes forth to others, but the warmth and cheriſhing heat of it remains within his own breaſt. What chearful, what exulting reflexions may he make upon himſelf, that can make good S. *Paul*'s proteſtation, *Acts* 20. 26. that *he is pure from the bloud of all men?* That he hath not by any ſcandalous Example enſnared any Soul; but on the contrary hath by poſitive illuſtrious acts of Vertue endeavoured ſo to adorn his Chriſtian Profeſſion, as to draw in Proſelytes not to the Name, but the obedience of Chriſt? That hath made it his buſineſs to ſtand in the Gap, not only by his interceſſions with God againſt the Plagues, but by his endeavours with men againſt the ſins of the Nation, and by a ſteady oppoſing himſelf againſt the inundation of profaneneſs and licentiouſneſs, hath invited others to give ſome ſtop to thoſe impure torrents? It has always been accounted ſo glorious a thing to redeem ones Country from ſlavery, that men have thought their greateſt hazards amply paid with the Title of a Patriot. But there is no vaſſalage ſo ignoble, no ſervitude ſo miſerable, as that of Vice, and conſequently no attempt ſo worthy, ſo ingenuous, ſo ſatisfactory to the undertaker, as to break that yoke. He that aſpires to no more than a private Innocence, is only on the defenſive part, ſtands upon his guard againſt Satan: But he that aims at this ſort of publick Reformations, maintains an invaſive War againſt him, and ſo more ſhakes his kingdom. The reducing of any ſinner is the diſpoſſeſſing him of ſo much of his uſurpt territory, and weakens his Empire in the world. This is indeed the true *Publick Spirit:* Which though many have pretended to, from

from whom we discern nothing of these effects; yet those very pretensions bear witness to the excellency of the thing, and ought to animate men to be indeed, what so many have coveted to be thought.

28. I suppose I need not go on to the other instance: Every mans sense, without consulting either his Reason or Religion, will be able to pronounce that 'tis better to be in Peace than Hostility, to have a whole than a wounded body, to keep securely his own station, than to be hunted like a *Partridge on the mountains* by the *avenger of Bloud*. The greater is the Miracle, that men who in all other instances devote themselves wholly to their sensuality, should here only abjure it; that when Body and Soul come in competition, live as if they had no Soul, yet upon this occasion can dare, as if they had no Bodies. Oh that men should be such ill husbands of their sufferings, and thus enhanse Satan's markets! Alas, *Hell* is a Purchase will never be taken out of their hands; how many Chapmen soever they see about it, they may secure their Estate there firm enough by those sins they have more gust of: Why should they be thus madly prodigal to out-bid the common rate! Must *Gentlemen* buy Damnation, as they usually do Wares, dearer than other men? How is Perdition become so amiable, that like *Rachel, a double servitude* is judged light for it; whilest Heaven in the mean time, like *Leah, is so* much *despised*; that 'tis thought an injury to have that obtruded on them, though upon the easiest terms? Certainly they are strange transforming *Opticks* which these men make use of. Would God they could be but perswaded if not to break, yet at least for a while to lay by those false *Glasses*, and behold things in their genuine and proper shapes: And then I doubt not they will discern that Honour to be infamy, which sets men at defiance with God; and that Reputation then alone becomes estimable, when like a River it pays its Tribute to the Ocean, promotes his Glory, at whose feet Kings (without diminution) cast both themselves and Crowns.

There is much more satisfaction to live in peace and safety in the World, than to be always engag'd in fighting and quarrelling.

SECT. IX.

THE CONCLUSION.

1. WE have now according to our proposed Method, surveyed distinctly those several *Advantages* which *Gentlemen* enjoy, and may surely give the same testimony which *Caleb* and *Joshua* did of *Canaan*, Numb. 14. *The Land which we passed thorow to search it, is an exceeding good Land.* 'Tis a rich and fertile Soil wherein these men are planted, such as hath a natural aptitude and vigour to produce the most excellent Fruits. But *Paradise* it self required dressing, and therefore we find *Adam* had that work assigned him in his Innocence. And surely these his Sons may well submit to the same Task: By the faithful discharge whereof they may make some approaches towards that his pristine state.

The Conclusion of the whole, containing an enforcement of all the forgoing particulars.

2. It need not be again inculcated, that all these their Receits have their special and particular ends in Gods assignment. 'Twill be more useful to remember them, how nearly they are concern'd not to pervert the Counsel of God against themselves, by neglecting to give them their due expected improvements. For though he be a most liberal, yet is he not a negligent Master, but keeps an exact and punctual account of whatever he thus delivers out, and will not fail severely to avenge the embezeling of his Goods. Indeed such an abuse has so fatal an efficacy, that it quite changes their Nature,

converts them from bleſſings to the heavieſt Curſes: Would God too many men had not thus exemplified their own deſtructive power, and by a kind of *Anti-creation* brought Darkneſs out of Light.

3. But 'tis pity they ſhould be permitted to ſleep in that Darkneſs, which themſelves have made. And therefore if this *little Tract* ſhall fall into any ſuch hands, it muſt avow to come upon that uncivil yet friendly Errand, to diſturb their reſt, to awake them to ſome Conſideration, and as *Philip's* Monitor was to *remember him, that he was but a Man*, ſo to put them in mind, that in the midſt of their freeſt enjoyments they are ſtill but *Stewards*, and know not how ſoon their Lord may ſummon them to their Accounts. And with what confuſion and conſternation muſt they appear at the great *Audit*, who have ſo unfaithfully manag'd their truſt? 'Tis therefore now no longer time to dally, but by an aſſiduous care and diligence to endeavour to redeem their paſt ill-husbandry, leſt they run the Fate of that *Evil Servant* mention'd, *Matth.* 24. be ſurpriſed in the midſt of their Inordinacies, and have their *portion* aſſigned them in *weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.*

4. And now what Objection can they poſſibly make againſt this ſo neceſſary a Caution, which is founded upon ſuch Motives, as ſhould methinks infallibly prevail upon all ſorts of tempers? If they have any ſenſe of Fear, here are thoſe terrors of the Lord, which are amazing enough to ſet even a *Belſhazzar* (though with the Cup at his Mouth, his Concubines by his ſide) *a trembling.* Certainly he muſt not be only frozen but petrified in deſperate impiety, whom even a glimpſe of thoſe eternal flames will not be able to diſſolve.

5. But if *Fear* (though of God) be too degenerous a Paſſion for a *Gentleman* to own, this advice can upon as good grounds addreſs it ſelf to their *Hope:* There is as well the *Joy of the Lord* for the *Faithful*, as the *outer Darkneſs* for the *unprofitable Servant.* For though God have Right of abſolute Dominion, and might exact obedience on his bare command; yet he is more pleaſed to ſhew himſelf a Benefactor than a Lord, and therefore deſcends to treat with men by the more gentle and inviting methods of Promiſes and Rewards. Nay indeed the end of his Commands is only to make us capable Subjects of thoſe Eternal Felicities he deſires to beſtow. And this ſurely is enough to excite men to a diligent negotiating with thoſe Talents they have received, ſince it is indeed themſelves they are trading for. The Stock it is true is Gods, but all the increaſe of it will by his bounty certainly devolve on them. And therefore as *Naaman's* Servants thought the cure he was in a purſuit of, deſerved a ſubmiſſion to the ſevereſt Preſcriptions, *If the Prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it?* 2 Kings 5. 3. So ſurely we may conclude thoſe endleſs Joys propoſed by God, are cheaply earned even by the moſt exhauſting Labours, the moſt vigorous Tasks.

6. But ſuch is the tenderneſs and Indulgence of our gracious Maſter, ſo earneſt his deſire of his diſpenſing his Rewards, that he will not truſt mens ſloth and folly with ſuch a pretence of defeating themſelves; and therefore hath annexed no ſuch Condition. We have ſeen, through all the ſeveral parts of Duty, which conſtitute the *Gentleman's Calling*, that they are of a quite diſtant frame, not Toils but Refreſhments, not Yokes but Crowns, ſuch as differ only in ſize from thoſe Celeſtial ones to which they tend; ſo that here is bait even to the greateſt Voluptuary. And who that obſerves how many ſuch there be, would expect this *Fruit of Paradiſe* ſhould ſtill hang untouched? Yet ſuch a prepoſterous Temperance have they put on,

on, that they are proof againſt all theſe allurements. Good God! what contradictions are men made up of! It is the buſineſs of their lives to purſue pleaſures, and yet when thoſe of the moſt refined and exquiſite ſort would run into their embraces, they grow coy, and cannot be courted to receive them. We daily ſee the Devil hath his *Martyrs:* It ſeems he hath his *Aſceticks* too. And ſo witty is the World grown in creating ſins, that they have found out a *ſin of ſelf-denial.* Would God theſe abſurd Mortifiers might be perſwaded to remit ſomewhat of their ſeverity. The moſt rigid *Orders* in Religion have ſtill indulged ſome relaxation, ſome times of Feſtivity: Why ſhould Satan's Votaries be ſo much more zealous than God's, as to make their abſtinences ſo perpetual?

7. It ſpeaks indeed the Cruelty of that Maſter they ſerve, but ſo it does his *Policy* alſo. He well knows that if theſe Divine Lights ſhould but inſinuate themſelves, they would ſoon undermine his whole Foundation: So raviſhing and attractive are they, that nothing but a perfect Ignorance of them can be Amulet ſufficient againſt their Charms. And therefore it is his neceſſary concern to keep men from ever taſting of them, the leaſt reliſh whereof would be ſure to make them deſpiſe all his adulterated Delicacies. So we ſee he can give ſome rational account of his part of the matter. But what can men ſay for themſelves, who play his Game for him, even when their own Souls are at the ſtake, that at once renounce that Eternal intereſt, and Preſent pleaſure? This is indeed in *David's* Phraſe, 2 *Sam.* 3.33. *to die as a Fool dieth.* Their hands are not bound, nor their feet put into fetters; no extrinſick hindrance lies on them, why they may not *ſtretch forth their Hand to* this *Tree of Life, and eat and live* happily here and glorioufly *for ever.* And yet like *Solomon's* ſluggard, *they hide their hands in their boſom, and will not ſo much as bring them to their mouths,* Prov. 19. 24.

8. This is ſo ſtupid a Folly, as none that pretends to common ſenſe, would in any worldly concernment be guilty of. Will any man renounce a rich unchargeable Reverſion, when he is not only wooed, but bribed by a conſiderable Sum in hand not to diſclaim it? I fear there are few ſo *mortified to Wealth,* as to do it upon the ſcore of Self-denial; and ſure no man would be thought in his wits, that ſhould do it upon any other. For what jealouſies ſoever he had entertained of the Security, or value of that future Eſtate, yet the preſent viſible profit would deſerve his conſideration. There is but one circumſtance imaginable, that could reaſonably avert him, and that is the ſuſpicion of *Deceit,* that the Coin which is offered him is falſe and adulterate. And that I may not be under a neceſſity of pronouncing ſo many men mad, I ſhall ſuppoſe it not unlikely that this ſcruple may occur to them in the preſent Caſe. They have ſo long brought all their *Bullion* to Satan's Mint, ſuffered him to ſtamp their Pleaſures, that none will now paſs for current with them, which has not his Impreſs: And upon this account 'tis too probable they may diſtruſt the validity of the preſent Payment, disbelieve the pleaſantneſs of thoſe *Duties* I have here recommended to their Enjoyment, as well as Practice. Nor ſhall I deſire to impoſe on their belief, but ſhall very willingly wave their Faith, and appeal to their *Senſe.* But then they muſt remember, that that is uncapable of judging by any other means but *Experience:* And therefore if all that has been addreſt to their *Reaſon* be ineffectual, that remains as the laſt reſerve for their convincement. Let every one of them ſeriouſly and conſcientiouſly ſet to the *Practice,* (and allow only for ſo much of difficulty, as naturally attends the interrupting a contrary Cuſtom) and then let him if he can, doubt of the Pleaſure. Let him allow himſelf but this one *Medium* to infer it, and I ſhall

defie

deſie his diſſent to the *Concluſion.* Let him *ſow* with me this handful of Seed *in the Tears* of true Contrition for remembring his Duty and Intereſt ſo late, and I ſhall reſt confident *he will reap in joy* in this World, and carry the news of it to another, even thither alſo *bring his ſheaves with him, abundance of Fruit to his account,* be bleſt here, and crown'd eternally.

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS.

A CONFESSION.

O *BLESSED Lord, I thy wretched Creature, thy not only unprofitable and ſlothful, but wicked Servant, do here proſtrate my ſelf at thy Feet, humbly acknowledging that I have moſt perverſly and moſt treacherouſly miſ-imployed thoſe many precious Talents wherewith thou haſt intruſted me. I have, O Lord, unworthily abuſed thoſe common Mercies which thou haſt afforded me as a Man, and a Chriſtian, my whole life having been a continued reſiſtance to the Dictates both of Reaſon and Religion. But I have yet farther perverted thoſe more ſpecial Liberalities of thine, whereby thou haſt aſſayed to vanquiſh and melt an ungrateful heart. My Knowledge hath had no influence on my Choices, but I have obſtinately purſued thoſe ways, which I knew led to the Chambers of Death, and by advancing my Sins from Ignorances to Preſumptions, hath ſerved only to render me liable to the greater number of ſtripes. That Wealth whereby I ſhould have glorified Thee, and ſuccoured my Brethren, I have converted into fuel to maintain and accend my Covetouſneſs, Pride and Luxury, ſo levying War againſt Thee with thine own Treaſure. Thus unfaithful, O Lord, have I been in the unrighteous* Mammon; *and who then ſhall commit to my truſt the true Riches? I have waſted that Time thou haſt given me, to work out my own Salvation, vainly and impertinently, nay often ſo viciouſly and impiouſly, that Idleneſs, though a Crying ſin of* Sodom, *hath been the ſilenteſt of my guilts, the greater portion of my Days having been devoted either to the purſuit or enjoyment of my brutiſh Pleaſures, ſo making it my buſineſs to provide for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof; and of thoſe many Days and Years thou haſt afforded me, how few minutes are there of which I can give any tolerable account to Thee, or my own Soul? Nay, O Lord, as if my ſingle and perſonal Impieties had been too little, I have propagated them to Others, and have made that Authority and Eſteem, which thou gaveſt me for better purpoſes, the means of enſnaring all whom my Intereſt or Example could ſeduce. And now, O Lord, how unknown aſtoniſhing a weight of guilt do I lie under, that am to anſwer for ſo many Sins of Other men, as well as my ſelf, that have thus been a Snare on* Mizpah, *and a Net ſpread on Mount* Tabor, *the Inſtrument of entangling and betraying ſo many Souls? O merciful Lord, who delighteſt not in the death of a ſinner, look with pity both on them, and me; Give me a ſincere and earneſt Repentance, for my own offences, and if it be thy bleſſed will, make me ſome way inſtrumental to the begetting the like in them, that I may be as contributive to their Recovery, as I have been to their Fall: And let the conſciouſneſs of my great Sloth and Unfaithfulneſs in all the parts of my Stewardſhip, excite me to a more diligent and induſtrious improvement of all thoſe advantages thou haſt put into my hands, for thy glory, the bene-*

fit

fit of my Brethren, and the eternal joy of my own Soul. Grant this, O gracious Lord, for his ſake, who came to call ſinners to Repentance, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A THANKSGIVING.

O MOST gracious and moſt bountiful Lord, who doſt good unto all, but haſt in an extraordinary meaſure abounded to me thy unworthieſt Servant. I deſire with all exuberant thankfulneſs of heart, to confeſs and celebrate this thy great goodneſs. Lord, thou haſt not been to me a Wilderneſs, a Land of Darkneſs, but haſt cauſed my Lot to fall in a fair ground. Thou haſt not only given me a Natural, and a capacity of a Spiritual life, but haſt alſo enriched me with many advantages for the comfortable ſupport of the one, and the happy improvement of the other, above what thou affordeſt to multitudes of others. Thou haſt liberally given me of the Dew of Heaven, and fatneſs of the Earth, an aſſurance of all thoſe good things which may both oblige and aſſiſt me chearfully to ſerve Thee. O let not my Heart like Gideon's *Fleece remain dry, whilſt all about it is thus plentifully watered from Heaven; but give me, I beſeech thee, ſuch a ſenſe of thy Mercy, as may expreſs it ſelf in a conſtant and zealous Obedience. Thou haſt done ſo much for this meaneſt Plant in thy Vineyard, dreſt it and fenced it about with Thy Grace and Providence; and having built a Wine-preſs, mayeſt moſt reaſonably expect ſome Cluſters to be brought to it at the Vintage. O let not ſo gracious, ſo equitable a demand be fruſtrated, when thou lookeſt it ſhould bring forth Grapes, let it not bring forth wild Grapes; let not thoſe Advantages I enjoy above others, tempt me to exalt my ſelf, or deſpiſe them, but grant me always to remember that it is thou only that makeſt me differ from another. Lord, let thy Methods be my Documents, thy Diſpenſations of Indulgence towards me, the Engagements and Bands of the cloſeſt and moſt inviolable Duty, that that Eminency of condition wherein thou haſt placed me in this World, may be an effectual Admonition to me to be eminent in Vertue, that Men ſeeing my good Works, may glorifie Thee my Heavenly Father, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and bleſſed Saviour,* Amen.

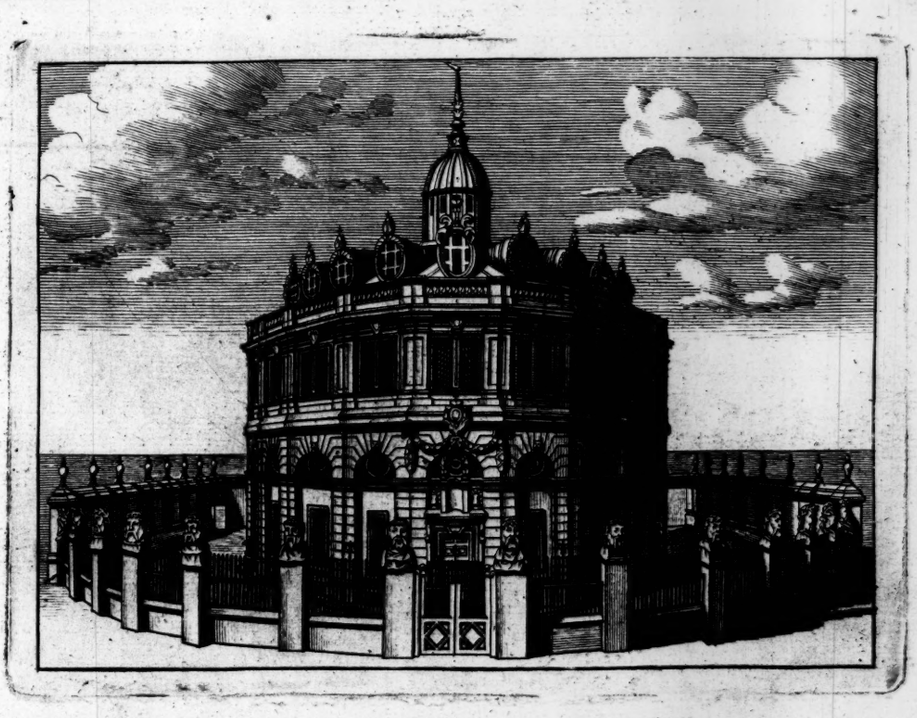
A PRAYER.

O THOU moſt Righteous and Impartial Judge, who deſpiſeſt not the mean, nor accepteſt the perſons of the Mighty. Make me always to remember and ſeriouſly to conſider, that none of thoſe outward Priviledges I enjoy among men, can exempt me from thy ſevere Tribunal, but that I ſhall one day be brought to Judgment, as for all that I have done in the fleſh, ſo particularly for thoſe ſpecial and peculiar Advantages, whereby thou haſt diſcriminated me from my meaner Brethren: And oh let theſe Terrors of the Lord timely perſwade, yea conſtrain me to a chearful imploying of all I have received, to thoſe ends for which thou haſt beſtowed them. Lord, grant that the Knowledge thou haſt given me, may have ſuch an efficacy on my Practice, that it may always guide, never upbraid me. And as thou haſt opened thy hand wide to me in temporal plenty, ſo enlarge my heart in Thankfulneſs toward Thee, and in Compaſſion and Bounty toward thy poor Members: I am not ſtraitned by thee. O let me not be ſtraitned in my own bowels; let neither Covetouſneſs nor Riot make me poor in the midſt of Riches, but grant me that true Enjoyment which conſiſts in a Charitable diſpenſing of them, that forſaking all the unſatisfying nauſeated pleaſures of Luxury, I may purchaſe to my ſelf that more ſolid tranſcending delight of ſuccouring the diſtreſſes of my fellow-Chriſtians. Lord, ſuffer not my wealth to be only a lading with thick Clay,

Clay, nor the Ruſt of it to bear witneſs againſt me, but rather make me of the number of thoſe that need relief, than of thoſe who want hearts to give it. And ſince in thy gracious Providence thou haſt placed me in a condition of eaſe and vacancy, O let me not pervert it into a life of Idleneſs and Senſuality, let me not be leſs, but better buſied than other men. O never ſuffer me to incur the guilt of reproach of being more remiſs or indifferent in my entercourſe with Thee, than others are of their Traffique with the World, of having leſs care of my own and other mens immortal Souls, than they have of their corruptible bodies; but make me ſo induſtriouſly to husband every minute of that precious Time thou lendeſt me here, as may be in order to a bleſſed Eternity both of my ſelf, and as many more as thou ſhalt put within my reach. O let not any perſons ever have cauſe to accuſe their relation to me, for betraying them to Sin here, or Miſery hereafter; but grant that all that are under my care or power, may receive ſuch wholeſom influence from me, as may nouriſh all Chriſtian Practice among them; And, Lord, grant that my Example may be ſuch to all, that I never prove to any an occaſion of Falling: Let me never contribute to that power and empire which Vice has gotten in the world, but with a ſteady courage oppoſe all impiety, how cuſtomary or ſucceſsful ſoever; Let me think nothing Honourable, but what bears thy ſtamp and impreſs on it, but engage, and animate, and inflame my benumm'd breaſt, to the moſt eager and vigorous endeavour of recovering diſcountenanc'd Vertue to ſome eſteem and reputation among men. And, O Lord, grant that by an aſſiduous Practice of all Duty, I may arrive to ſuch a guſt and reliſh of it, as may utterly ſupplant any ſenſual delights in my own heart, and may alſo qualifie me experimentally to aſſure others how ſweet the Lord is, that I may be an effectual (though unworthy) Inſtrument in thy hand of drawing many to the Obedience of Chriſt, and that renouncing all the vain torturing Ambitions of this World, I may aſpire to no other honour but that of being approved by Thee as a good and faithful Servant; that by thy mercy having my infirmities covered, and my Sincerity accepted, I may at laſt be admitted into the Joy of my Lord, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt my bleſſed Saviour and Mediator. Amen.

FINIS.

The Second Part
OF THE
WORKS
Of the LEARNED and PIOUS
AUTHOR
OF
The Whole Duty of Man.



Printed at the THEATER in OXFORD and are to be ſold by *George Paulet* Bookſeller in *London.* 1684.

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TRACTS
IN THIS
Second Part

The Ladies Calling *Pag.* 1.

The Government of the Tongue. *Pag.* 105.

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THE
Ladies Calling.
IN TWO PARTS.

THE

PREFACE.

THo the ſmalneſs of this Tract will ſcarce juſtifie the ſolemnity of a Preface; yet remembring 'tis deſign'd for those who are accuſtomed to Ceremonious Addreſſes, I think it not beſt to approch them too abruptly. And indeed beſides the Civility, there ſeems ſome uſe of it in order to my deſign. To adviſe, or reprove, is ſo ungrateful an office, that he that undertakes it, had need uſe all previous arts to vindicate the ſincerity of his purpoſe, and to convince the perſon admoniſhed, that 'tis neither ſpleen nor prejudice, but the moſt real exuberant kindneſs which promts him to inflict thoſe wounds of a friend, *Prov.* 27.6. and that he is never leſs an enemy, then when he thus tells them the truth, *Gal.* 4. 16. Therefore, tho they may in the enſuing leaves meet with ſome things which may have a ſhew of ſeverity, yet let me aſſure my Reader, they have indeed a deſign of the greateſt ſervice, by correcting the extravagance of ſome, to reſcue the whole Sex, as from the contagion of the example, ſo from the community of the blame. For ſuch is either the inadvertence, or malice of a great part of mankind, that (againſt all Rules of Diſcourſe) they deduce Generals from particulars, make every woman ſo far an Eve, that her depravation ſhall forfeit her whole kind; and becauſe there are fooliſh and ſcandalous women, will ſcarce allow there are any other.

The Authors deſign in the enſueing treatiſe.

The truth is, the Error ſeems in many Men to be affected; they propoſe to themſelves unworthy ends on Women, and make all their obſervations wholly in order to thoſe. He that is upon a baſe purſuit, takes particular notice of all that he thinks for his turn; the reſt fall not within his Sphere: and 'tis too probable he is ſo abundantly ſupplied for that abſolute conſideration, that he never deſcends to the comparative. Nay, perhaps there may be yet a deeper Original of the ſcandal: the World is much governed by eſtimation: and as Applauſe encourages and exalts, ſo an univerſal Contemt debaſes and dejects the Spirit. If it can once paſs into a Maxim, that Women are ſuch ſilly or vitious Creatures, it may put fair for the making them ſo indeed. Themſelves may imbibe the common

The contemt which men have entertaind of the femal Sex, comes from their unworthy ends upon them.

Opinion, charge all their Personal Faults on their Sex, think that they do but their kind, when indeed they most contradict it, and no more aspire to any thing worthy, then a man can pretend to the Excellencies of an Angel. And indeed this seemes to be the practical inference of some Women, who could hardly have descended to such Dishonours, had they not before been as vile in their own Eies, as they have afterwards rendred themselves in others.

'Twill be a charitable service to the femal Sex, to acquaint them with their own value.

It may therefore upon this account be a necessary Charity to the Sex, to acquaint them with their own Value, animate them to some higher thoughts of themselves; not to yield their Suffrage to those injurious Estimates the World hath made of them, and from a supposed Incapacity of Nobler things, to neglect the pursuit of them; from which God and Nature have no more precluded the Feminine, than the Masculine part of Mankind.

They have a powerful influence on all public transactions.

In reference to Secular Considerations, their advantages are most important; Women have a very powerful influence upon all sorts of Transactions in the World: the engaging of the Delilah, and plowing with the Heifer, Judg. 14, and 16. being ever the surest way to undermine the Counsels, and master the Force of the stoutest Samson. And accordingly Histories of all kinds assure us that the Gyneceum has still had a Rival Suffrage with the Senate. I might urge the more regular Powers which appertain unto that Sex: that all mankind is the Pupil and Disciple of Female-Institution: the Daughters till they write Women, and the Sons till the first seven years be past; the time when the mind is most ductile, and prepar'd to receive impression, being wholly in the Care and Conduct of the Mother. And whereas 'tis observ'd by Aristotle in his Politics, (and is a proof of his being as Wise, as he was a Learned Man) that the Estate of Republics entirely hang on private Families, the little Monarchies both composing and giving Law unto the great; 'tis evident that the disposal of Families and all domestic Concerns therein lies chiefly on the Wife; whence the same Aristotle declares, that the Spartans notwithstanding their ready addres's to Empire by their great Frugality, Industry, and military Vertue, could have but half a Happiness, as failing on the part of their Wives. But waving these reflexions, I shall fix only on the Personal Accomplishments of the Sex, and peculiarly that which is the most principle Endowment of the Rational Nature, I mean their understanding. Where first it will be a little hard to pronounce, that they are naturally inferior to men; when 'tis considered how much of extrinsic weight is put in the ballance to turn it on the Mens side. Men have their parts cultivated and improved by Education, refined and subtilized by Learning and Arts, are like an inclosed piece of a Common, which by Industry and Husbandry becomes a different thing from the rest, tho the natural Turf own'd no such inequality. And truly had Women the same Advantage, I dare not say but they would make as good returns of it; some of those few that have bin tried, have bin eminent in several parts of Learning. To omit the modern instances, Theano after the death of Pythagoras kept up his School; Socrates confesses himself to have bin instructed not only in Rhetoric by Aspatia, but even in the highest Points of Philosophy by Diotime. The Roman Story informs us of the deep wisdom of Tanaquil, Cornelia, Livia, to pass by others. And were we sure they would have ballast to their sails, have humility enough to poise them against the vanity of Learning, I see not why they might not more frequently be intrusted with it; for if they could be secur'd against this weed, doubtless the soil is rich enough to bear a good crop.

If they have disadvantage in reference to their intellectuals, in respect of men, their souls are equall, and alike capable of grace and glory.

But not to oppose a received opinion, let it be admitted, that in respect of their intellects they are below men; yet sure in the sublimest part of humanity, they are their equals: they have souls of as divine an Original, as endless a Duration, and as capable of infinit Beatitude. That spiritual Essence, that ray of Divinity owns no distinction of Sexes; so that in this sense also, that Aphorism of the

Apostle

Apoſtle holds good, there is neither Male nor Female, but all are one, *Gal.* 3. 28. *And ſure this is the one tranſcendent Excellency of Human Nature. For alas, what value can comparatively beſet upon all other Qualifications, which will finally leave us but like the Beaſts that periſh. And this, as it is the higheſt pitch of their worth, ſo it is the ſafeſt ſubject of their Contemplations: other knowledg, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks,* 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. may puff up, *this only will* edify.

As therefore when we would pride our ſelves, we uſe not to boaſt our meaner, but our beſt qualities: ſo let me ſolicite Ladies to be ſo juſt to themſelves, as not to take their own meaſures by any thing below this. Why ſhould they take ſo low a level of Greatneſs, as to value themſelves upon a title which is but a bigger blaſt of air, when they may derive their deſcent from above the Stars, claim cognation with Divinity? Why ſhould they dote on the fictitious image of a perhaps more fictitious beauty, which their glaſs preſents them, when they need but look inward to ſee an infinitely fairer Idea, an emanation of the eternal Brightneſs? Indeed did they make a juſt eſtimate of themſelves in this reſpect, it would overwhelm the vanity of thoſe inferior things wherein they now have ſuch complacency, nor would they ſuffer their nobler part to be affronted by the unequal competition of their meaner.

And here Ladies ſhould place their value of themſelves.

But there is alſo another conſequent which would flow from that eſteem; they would ſolicitouſly preſerve what they ſo highly prize, it being natural for us to proportion our care to our value. They would be jealouſly vigilant againſt every thing, that might eclipſe the radiancy or contaminate the purity of their ſouls. 'Twas the advice of a Heathen moraliſt, Revere thy ſelf; *and 'twas very wholſom counſel: for next our due veneration to God, a reverence to our ſelves is the moſt ſevere controler of all exorbitancies. How can a ſoul that remembers its celeſtial extraction, wallow it ſelf in the mire, ſtoop to any ſordid degenerous practices? 'Tis ſaid of* Themiſtocles, *that ſeeing once a rich booty about the dead corpſes of his enemies, he toucht it not, but pointing to another, ſaid, Take thou that, for thou art not Themiſtocles. If then a little military fame could ſo elevate his thoughts, 'tis a ſhame that any who carry an immortal ſpirit about them, ſhould not be raiſed above all the contemtible baits of this ſublunary world. Why ſhould they not with the like diſdain turn over all ſenſual inordinances to meer Animals, and creatures that have no higher principle then that of ſenſe, whilſt themſelves ſoar up to thoſe more ſublimated* pleſures, which are at God's right Hand for evermore, *Pſal.* 16. 12.

Such a value would produce ſolicitude and vigilance, to preſerve what we prize.

We may therefore conclude, that what ever vicious impotence Women are under, it is acquired, not natural; nor derived from any illiberality of Gods, but from the ill managery of his bounty. He has placed within them a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, ſufficient to ſhelter and conduct them thro all the ſtorms, all the intricacies that can occur in their journey to Canaan; *if they will forget that more intrinſic part of their being, live as if they were all body, reject the Manna, and rave after the Quails; that deſtruction which will thereby be induced, they muſt own to ſpring from themſelves. Let them not charge God fooliſhly, or think that by making them women, he neceſſitated them to be proud, or wanton, vain, or peeviſh; ſince 'tis manifeſt he made them to better purpoſes, was not partial to the other Sex, but that having as the Prophet ſpeaks,* abundance of ſpirit, *Mal.* 2. *he equally diſpenc'd it, and gave the feebleſt woman as large and capacious a ſoul as that of the Greateſt Heroe.*

Whatever vicious impotence women are under, it is acquir'd, not natural.

Nay give me leave to ſay farther, that as to an Eternal well being, he ſeems to have placed them in more advantageous circumſtances then he has don men. He has implanted in them ſom native propenſions, which (as I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to obſerve) do much facilitate the operations of Grace upon them. Beſides, there are many temtations to which men are expoſed, that are out of

As to eternal intereſts women ſeem placed in the moſt advantageous circumſtances.

their road. How hard is it for a man to converse in the world, but he shall be importun'd to debauchery and excess, must forfeit his sobriety to maintain the reputation of a sociable Person? Again, how liable are they by a promiscuous conversation among variety of humors, to meet with affronts, which the Maxims of Honor will tell them, must (in spight of all Christ's interdicts) be reveng'd? And this engages them in Quarrels, somtimes in Murders. Now none of these are incident to women: they must in these and som other instances attaque temtation, violently ravish guilt, and abandon their Sex, the whole Oeconomy of their estate, e're they can divest themselves of their innocency. So that God seems in many particulars to have closelier fenced them in, and not left them to those wilder excursions, for which the customary liberties of the other Sex afford a more open way. In short, they have so many advantages towards Vertue, that tho the Philosopher made it one of his solemn acknowledgments to God, that he had made him a man, not a woman: yet I think Christian women have now reason enough to invert that form, and to thank God that made them women, and not men.

Examples of eminent vertue and piety in Women.

But we know advantages which are only in speculation, are lookt on with som diffidence, till there have bin som practical experiment made of them; I shall therefore evidence the problem by demonstration and instance; desiring my Readers to mesure the possibilities of their arriving to eminent degrees of Vertue and Piety, by what others have attained to. I shall not fetch examples of Morality from heathen Women, because I am now upon an higher strain; (yet many such might be brought to the reproch of many Women, who pretending to more, fall infinitly short of that:) 'tis Christian Vertue that I am now recommending, and which has bin eminently exemplified in many of their Sex. How many Women do we read of in the Gospel, who in all the duties of assiduous attendance on Christ, liberalities of love and respect, nay even in zeal and courage, surpassed even the Apostles themselves? We find his Cross surrounded, his Passion celebrated by the avowed tears and lamentations of devout women, when the most sanguine of his Disciples had denied, yea forswore, and all had forsaken him. Nay, even Death it self could not extinguish their love; we find the devout Maries designing a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps hazardous respect to his Corps. And accordingly, 'tis a memorable attestation Christ gives to their Piety, by making them the first witnesses of his Resurrection, the prime Evangelists to proclame those glad Tidings; and as a Learned man speaks, Apostles to the Apostles. Nor is the devotion of that Sex to be found only in the sacred Records; the Primitive times have left us many Memorials of the like, and the Martyrologies are full of Female sufferers of all ages and conditions, who by the fervor of their Zeal had overcome the timorousness of their Nature, and wearied the cruelty of their Persecutors. And as Women helpt to augment the number of Martyrs, so did they of Confessors also, in a stout owning, and diligent practice of Christianity. Queens and Empresses knew no Title so Glorious as that of a nursing Mother to the Church, have often exchanged their Palaces for little Cells and Oratories, and valued not their own Diadems in comparison with their Savior's Crown of Thorns. And tho by a perpetual declination from that pristine Zeal, the instances have in every age grown less numerous, yet none has wanted som very illustrious Examples. Nay even in our dregs of time, in this common decay of all good, there are, I doubt not, many who (according to their opportunities) transcribe the former Copies, live like People that know they must live hereafter, and present us yet with som specimen of ancient Vertue. Nay to speak an impartial Truth, 'tis not to be denied, but the reputation of Religion is more kept up by women then men, many of the one countenancing it by their Practice, whereas more of the other do not only neglect, but decry it. And now since Women are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, who by doing the

thing

thing give the ſureſt evidence that 'tis not unfeaſible, why ſhould any plead an impoſſibility? In matter of Vanity and Pomp they are not ſo eaſily diſheartned, no pattern of that kind can be ſet, which will not be induſtriouſly imitated; nay in the greateſt inequality of materials for it. Why then ſhould their emulation leave them, where only it could do them good? How comes it, that of thoſe who have equal Principles of a ſpiritual Being, ſom live according to the Dignity of it; and others who ſee them do ſo, do yet live as if they aſſented to that Philoſophers Paradox, who ſaid Women had no ſouls; or at leaſt were of the Pythagorean Sect, and lookt upon themſelves only as the Jails and Priſons of former offending Spirits, which they reſolv'd to fit for a yet viler tranſmigration; give them the appetites of Beaſts before they aſſume the Bodies. This is indeed an unlucky Humility, that thoſe who in all their inſtances are apt to overween, ſhould here ſink ſo much below themſelves. And I hope 'twill not appear an uncivil addreſs, to perſwade them to a juſter eſtimate of their own worth. And if what has bin ſaid to that end may have any effect, I ſhall not deſire a better Preparation to the enſuing Tract; ſince ſhe that duly conſiders her own capacity of Eternal Bliſs, and withall, the poſſibility of as endleſs a Miſery, according as ſhe performs or neglects the ſeveral Parts of Duty, will ſure need no other incentive to the diligent Purſuit of it.

THE

THE Ladies Calling.

PART I. SECT. I.

Of Modeſty.

1. IT is now many years ſince an Addreſs was made to the Gentry of this Nation, to perſwade them to that Vertue which would be both their Pleaſure and Reward. I cannot, I confeſs, boaſt any ſuch effect of that, as ſhould much inſpirit the hopes of a new Attemt; yet ſince we ſee in our proper ſecular Concerns, Defeats do many times animate no leſs then Succeſs, I know not why in this more charitable deſigne I ſhould ſit down diſcouraged. Men uſually raiſe not a Siege upon the firſt repulſe, but reinforce their Batteries, obſerve more curiouſly which are the moſt aſſailable, acceſſible parts, and accordingly diſpoſe their aſſault: it will then be no unreaſonable imitation in the preſent caſe, if after a ſucceſleſs Attemt upon the more impregnable Maſculine part of the Gentry, I now aſſay the Feminine, whoſe native Softneſs and Gentleneſs may render them leſs apt for that reſiſtance of Good Counſel, wherein too many men place their Gallantry.

The writing of the Gentlemans calling, do's not ſuperſede an addreſs to the other Sex.

2. I preſume thoſe to whom that little Tract was at firſt deſign'd, will be ſo willing to relinquiſh their Title, that I might without imputation of Robbery, exchange my Patrons, and by a new Dedication ſuperſede the labor of a new Book. And indeed, ſince what was there ſaid was founded more on the diſtinction of qualities then of Sex, there would not need many razures to render it as proper for one as the other; and I ſhall take ſo much advantage of it, as to aſſure the Female Gentry, that they may there find much of the duty incumbent on them, in reſpect of that Rank and Condition they hold in the World: and therefore, though I ſhall ſometimes make ſome reflections on it; yet as to the main, I ſhall think it the eaſieſt courſe, as well for them as my ſelfe, to direct them thither.

Many duties are common to both.

3. But it may ſeem to have too much of the Pedant, to entertain new Scholars only with the caſt or nauſeated learning of the old; and when I remember I write to Ladies, who uſe to think the newneſs of any thing a conſiderable addition to its value; I conceive my ſelf oblig'd as well in Civility to their humor, as Charity to their needs, to give them ſomething which they may own as their peculiar. And to render it the more unalienable, I ſhall affix it to their Sex; and make it the ſubject of my preſent Inquiſition, what in reſpect of that are the proper and diſtinct Obligations, under which by the aſſignment of God and Nature they are placed.

The peculiar to the later, are here intended to be treated of.

Such vertues, as with ſome propriety may be ſtiled feminine.

4. That the Obligation to moral and Chriſtian Vertues is in it ſelf univerſal, and not confin'd to any Sex or Perſon, is not to be denied: yet, as in human Conſtitutions there are often Precepts, which (tho not excluſive of any, do yet) more peculiarly and eminently level at ſome particular Rank or Order of Men; ſo in the Laws of God and Nature, there appears the like diſtinction. That All-wiſe Creator, who hath put peculiar Proprieties and Inclinations into his Creatures, hath accordingly deſignd their actuating and improving them: and altho in mankind, which differs not in ſpecies but in gender, the variety may ſeem leſs; yet there is ſtill enough to found ſome diverſity, either in the kind or degree of duty. This ſure is ſhadowed to us in that particular caution given to the Jews, not to confound the habit of the ſeveral Sexes, *Deut.* 22.5. and yet more clearly evinc'd in the Precept which the Apoſtles addreſs to women, 1. *Tim.* 2.9. and 1. *Pet.* 3.3. Nay, this is ſo granted a Truth, that all Ages and Nations have made ſome diſtinction between Maſculine and Feminine Vertues, Nature having not only given a diſtinction as to the Beauties of their outward Form, but alſo in their very mold and conſtitution implanted peculiar Aptneſſes and Proprieties of Mind, which accordingly vary the meſure of Decency; that being comely for the one Sex, which often is not (at leaſt in the ſame degree) for the other. It will therefore be no abſurd attemt to decipher thoſe Excellencies, which are the genuine and proper Ornaments of Women: which tho in ſome inſtances they may perhaps prove coincident with thoſe of Men; yet even thoſe which are equally incluſive of both, by the Divine command may have ſome additional weight on the Female ſide, in reſpect of Decency, Fame, or ſome other (not deſpicable) conſideration.

Of theſe, ſome vertues belong to all; others have a reſpect to ſeveral ſtates of life.

5. For the better directing our preſent Inquiſition, it will be moſt regular, firſt to enquire what thoſe Vertues are which are univerſally neceſſary to Women in all Ages and circumſtances of their lives: ſuch which, like the firſt matter, are prerequir'd for all forms; which, like a firm and ſolid Baſis, muſt ſupport all various Events, all changes of their Condition or Relations. And ſecondly, we ſhall conſider them in thoſe changes; track them thro the ſeveral Stages and Periods of Life, thro thoſe ſeveral States which create the moſt conſiderable mutations to them; and in each of thoſe conſider what are the new and proportionate Acceſſions of Duty.

Some alſo are of greater, others of leſs importance.

6. As in the outward Accommodations of Life, the things of moſt daily and indiſpenſable uſe deſerve the greateſt Value; ſo in Moral or Divine Endowments, the benefit of poſſeſſing is beſt meſured by the miſery of wanting them. This firſt rank therefore of Female Vertues, which we are to treat of, will have that to recommend them; they being ſo ſtrictly neceſſary, that their abſence is not only a privative ill, but alſo expoſes to a deluge of all poſitive miſchiefs conſequent to that privation.

The leading feminine vertue is modeſty: which appears firſt in the look.

7. This will be found true in all the ſeverals we are to paſs thro, but in none more eminently then in that we ſhall chuſe to begin with, the Vertue of Modeſty; which may be conſidered in a double notion, the one as it is oppoſed to Boldneſs and Indecency, the other to Lightneſs and Wantonneſs. In the firſt Acception *Zeno* has not ill defin'd it, to be *the Science of Decent Motion*, it being that which guides and regulates the whole Behavior, checks and controles all rude Exorbitancies, and is the great Civilizer of Converſations. It is indeed a Vertue of a general Influence; do's not only ballaſt the mind with ſober and humble thoughts of ones ſelf, but alſo ſteers every part of the outward frame. It appears in the face

face in calm and meek looks, where it ſo impreſſes it ſelf, that it ſeems thence to have acquir'd the name of ſhamefac'dneſs. Certainly, (whatever the modern opinion is) there is nothing gives a greater luſter to a Feminine Beauty: ſo that St. *Paul* ſeems not ill to have conſulted their Concerns in that Point, when he ſubſtitutes that as a ſuppletory Ornament to *the deckings of Gold and Pearl and coſtly Aray*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9. But I fear this now will be thought too antiquated a dreſs, and an Apoſtle be eſteemed no competent Judg in this Science; which is now become ſo ſolemn a thing, that certainly no Academy in the World can vie numbers with the Students of this Myſtery. Yet when they have ſtrein'd their Art to the higheſt Pitch; an innocent Modeſty, and native ſimplicity of Look, ſhall eclipſe their Glaring Splendor, and triumph over their Artificial Handſomneſs: on the other ſide, let a Woman be decked with all the embelliſhments of Art, nay and care of Nature too, yet if Boldneſs be to be read in her Face, it blots all the lines of Beauty, is like a cloud over the Sun, intercepts the view of all that was otherwiſe Amiable, and renders its blackneſs the more obſervable, by being plac'd near ſomwhat that was apt to attract the eies.

8. But Modeſty confines not its ſelf to the Face, ſhe is there only in ſhadow and effigie; but is in life and motion in the Words, whence ſhe baniſhes all Indecency and Rudeneſs, all inſolent Vauntings, and ſupercilious Diſdains, and what ever elſe may render a Perſon troubleſom, or ridiculous to the Company. Nor do's ſhe only refine the Language, but ſhe tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandſom earneſtneſs, or loudneſs of Diſcourſe, the latter whereof was thought ſo indecent in *Carneades*, (tho in his public Lectures) that the Gymnaſiarch reproved him for it. And ſure if 'twere not allowable in a Philoſopher in his Schole, 'twill leſs become a woman in ordinary converſe; and if we conſult *Prov.* 7. 11. and 9. we ſhall find loudneſs and clamor in women coupled with ſuch other epithets, as will ſurely not much recommend it. A womans tongue ſhould indeed be like the imaginary Muſic of the Spheres, ſweet and charming, but not to be heard at diſtance. *Next in the words.*

9. And as Modeſty preſcribes the manner, ſo it do's alſo the meſure of ſpeaking; reſtrains all exceſſive talkativeneſs, a fault incident to none but the bold; the monopolizing of Diſcourſe being one of the greateſt aſſumings imaginable, and ſo rude an impoſing upon the company, that there can ſcarce be a greater indecency in converſation. This is ingeniouſly expreſt by our Divine Poet *Herbert*, *Not only in the manner, but alſo meſure of ſpeaking.*

A Civil Gueſt
Will no more talk all, then eat all the Feaſt.

He that engroſſes the talk, enforces ſilence upon the reſt, and ſo is preſumed to look on them only as his Auditors and Pupils, whilſt he magiſteriouſly dictates to them: which gave occaſion to *Socrates* to ſay, *It is arrogance to ſpeak all, and to be willing to hear nothing.* It is indeed univerſally an inſolent unbecoming thing, but moſt peculiarly ſo in a woman.

10. The ancient Romans thought it ſo much ſo, that they allowed not that Sex to ſpeak publicly, tho it were in their own neceſſary defence; inſomuch that when *Ameſia* ſtood forth to plead her own cauſe in the Senate, they lookt on it as ſo prodigious a thing, that they ſent to conſult *Speaking in public has bin in all ſtates interdicted women.*

the Oracle what it portended to the State. And tho theſe firſt ſeverities were ſoon loſt in the ſucceſſes of that Empire, *Valerius Maximus* could find but two more, whoſe either neceſſity or impudence, perſwaded them to repete this unhandſom attemt.

And by St. Paul in the Chriſtian Church.

11. And this great indecency of Loquacity in Women, I am willing to hope is the reaſon why that Sex is ſo generally charged with it; not that they are all guilty, but that when they are, it appears ſo unhandſom, as makes it the more eminent and remarkable. Whether it were from that ungracefulneſs of the thing, or from the propenſion Women have to it, I ſhall not determin; but we find the Apoſtle very earneſt in his cautions againſt it, 1 *Cor.* 14. 35. He expreſly enjoins Women to *keep ſilence in the Church*, where he affirms it a ſhame for them to ſpeak: and tho this ſeems only reſtrain'd to the Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, yet even ſo it reaches home to the gifted Women of our age, who take upon them to be Teachers; whereas he allowed them not to ſpeak in the Church, no not in order to learning, tho a more modeſt deſign then that of teaching. But beſides this, he has a more indefinit preſcription of ſilence to Women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 11. *Let women learn in ſilence*; and again, v. 12. *to be in ſilence.* The Apoſtle ſeems to ground the Phraſe, not only on the inferiority of the woman in regard of the creation and firſt ſin, v. 13, 14. but alſo on the preſumtion that they needed inſtruction, towards which, ſilence has alwaies bin reckoned an indiſpenſible qualification, the introductory precept in all Scholes, as that wherein all attention is founded. If ſome women of our age think they have outgon that novice ſtate the Apoſtle ſuppoſes, and want no teaching; I muſt crave leave to believe, they want that very firſt Principle which ſhould ſet them to learn, *viz.* the knowledg of their own ignorance: a ſcience which ſo grows with ſtudy and conſideration, that *Socrates* after a long life ſpent in purſuit of Wiſdom, gave this as the ſum of his learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing.* This proficiency ſeems much wanting to our female Talkers, who, in this, ſeem to confute the common Maxim, and give what they have not, by making their ignorance viſible to others, tho it be undiſcernable to themſelves: and to ſuch we may not unfitly apply the Sarcaſm of *Zeno* to a talkative Youth: *their ears are faln into their tongue.*

So alſo the being tatlers.

12. But beſides this aſſuming ſort of talkativeneſs, there is another uſually charged upon the Sex, a mere chatting, pratling humor, which maintains it ſelf at the coſt of their neighbors, and can never want ſupplies as long as there is any body within the reach of their obſervation. This I would fain hope is moſt the vice of the vulgar ſort of Women, the education of the Nobler ſetting them above thoſe mean entertainments. Yet when 'tis remembred that St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. makes Tatling the effect of Idleneſs, it may not unreaſonably be feared, that where there is moſt of the Cauſe, there will be ſome of the Effect. And indeed, it would puzzle one to conjecture, how that round of formal Viſits among Perſons of Quality ſhould be kept up without this. That their Viſits ſhould be only a dumb Shew, none will ſuſpect among women; and when the unfaſhionable themes of Houſwifery, Piety, &c. are excluded, there will not remain many Topics of Diſcourſe, unleſs this be called in to ſupply. And this indeed is a moſt inexhauſtible reſerve, it having ſo many ſprings to feed it, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible it ſhould fail. And when 'tis farther conſidered, how apt a miniſter it is to Envy, Spleen, Revenge, and other feminine Paſſions, we cannot ſuppoſe it can be unacceptable where any of thoſe bear ſway. But I believe it is not more frequently introduc'd by any thing then the

the vanity of Wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant range than in cenſuring and deriding; nay, finds not only Exerciſe but Triumph too, vain Perſons ſeldom conſidering the Infirmities or Follies of others, without ſome Complacencies, and aſſuming reflections on themſelves; which how unagreeable it renders this liberty of talking to that Modeſty we recommend, is obvious enough. And would God 'twere only oppoſit to that; but it is no leſs ſo to all the Obligations of Juſtice and Charity alſo, which are ſcarce ſo frequently violated by any thing, as by this licentiouſneſs of the tongue.

A conſequent of talkativeneſs is reveling ſecrets.

13. There is yet another vice of it, for which the female Sex has bin generally accus'd, and that is reveling of ſecrets: an infirmity preſum'd ſo incident to them, that *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have made it one of the three things he ſolemnly repented of, that he had ever truſted a Secret with a Woman. But by how much the greater prejudice they lie under in this reſpect, the greater ought to be their caution to vindicate not only their Perſons but their Sex, from the imputation, which is indeed extreamly reprochful: this blabbing humor being a ſymptom of a looſe, impotent ſoul, a kind of incontinence of the mind, that can retain nothing committed to it; but as if that alſo had its Diabetic paſſion, perpetually and almoſt inſenſibly evacuating all. And indeed however we are willing to appropriate this to the Sex, yet the fault is owing only to this ill conſtitution of the mind, which is oft-times no leſs viſible in men; as on the contrary, thoſe women who by reaſon and vertue have acquir'd a Solidity and Firmneſs of mind, are as ſure repoſitories of a ſecret, as the moſt maſculine confident: and ſuch I have no intent to involve in this charge, but rather by propoſing their example to the reſt, ſhew that nature has put them under no fatal neceſſity of being thus impotent. A ſecret is no ſuch unruly thing, but it may be kept in: they may take the Wiſe man's word for it, *Eccluſ.* 19. 10. *If thou haſt heard a word let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burſt thee.*

Confident talking is unhappily miſtaken for good breeding.

14. This is a piece of daring manlineſs, which they may affect without breach of Modeſty; would God they would take it in exchange for that virile Boldneſs, which is now too common among many even of the beſt Rank. Such a degenerous age do we now live in, that every thing ſeems inverted, even Sexes; whilſt men fall to the Effeminacy and Niceneſs of women, and women take up the Confidence, the Boldneſs of men, and this too under the notion of good Breeding. A bluſh (tho formerly reputed the color of Vertue) is accounted worſe manners then thoſe things which ought to occaſion it, and ſuch as nothing but the ſimplicity of a Country Girl can excuſe. But the infirmity for the moſt part proves very corrigible; a few weeks of the Town Diſcipline wears off that piece of Ruſticity, and advances them to a modiſh Aſſurance. Nor is that deſign'd to terminate in it ſelf, but it is to carry them on, till they arrive to a perfect Metamorphoſis, their Geſture, their Language, nay ſomtimes their Habit too being affectedly maſculine; ſo that what *Tacitus* ſpeaks of *Vitellius* in relation to his being a Prince, we may apply to them, and ſay, that *if others did not remember them to be women, themſelves could eaſily forget it.*

Which advances to ranting and ſwearing.

15. Yet were this affectation confin'd only to the more innocent indifferent things, 'twere more tolerable; but alas it extends farther, and there are women who think they have not made a ſufficient eſcape from their ſex, 'till they have aſſumed the Vices of men too. A ſober modeſt Dialect is too effeminate for them: a bluſtring ranting ſtile is taken up, and (to ſhew them proficients in it) adorn'd with all the Oaths and Imprecations

their memory or invention can ſupply: as if they meant to vindicate their ſex from the imputation of Timerouſneſs by daring God Almighty. 'Tis true indeed, an Oath ſounds gratingly out of whatever mouth, but out of a womans it hath ſuch an uncouth harſhneſs, that there is no noiſe on this ſide Hell can be more amazingly odious; Yet this is a muſic this diſcordant age hath introduc'd, no former having I think ever heard it in places at all civiliz'd. So that the female ſwearers want that poor ſhadow of excuſe the men pretend to, it having bin ſo far from cuſtomary, that the unwontedneſs could not but force them to ſom induſtry and pains, e're they could acquire the habit, and ſet up for female Hectors; an eſſay, wherein they have bin very kind to the maſculine, by ſhewing the world there can be ſomthing worſe.

And alſo drinking and proſtitute lewdneſs.

16. 'Tis ſaid there want not ſom who compleat the demonſtration by the other parallel quality of Drinking alſo; a vice deteſtable in all, but prodigious in women, who put a double violence upon their nature, the one in the intemperance, the other in the immodeſty. And tho they may take their immediat copy from men, yet (to the praiſe of their proficiency) they outdo their Exemplar and draw near the Original: nothing human being ſo much beaſt as a drunken woman. This is evident enough if we look only on the meer ſurface of the crime; but if we dive farther into its inferences and adherencies, the affirmation is yet more irrefragable. She who is firſt a proſtitute to Wine, will ſoon be to Luſt alſo: ſhe has diſmiſt her Guards, diſcarded all the ſuggeſtions of reaſon, as well as Grace; and is at the mercy of any, of every aſſailant. And when we conſider how much fuller the world is of *Amnons* then *Joſephs*, it will not be hard to gueſs the fate of that womans Chaſtity, which has no other bottom then that of mens. So that unleſs her vice ſecure her vertue, and the loathſomneſs of the one prevent attemts on the other, 'tis ſcarce imaginable a woman that loſes her Sobriety ſhould keep her Honeſty. So that indeed I might more properly have made this reflection when I come to ſpeak of Modeſty in the ſecond notion of it, as it is oppos'd to Lightneſs and Wantonneſs, but it falls not much amiſs now, to be the introduction to it.

Of Modeſty in behavior.

17. And if we conſider Modeſty in this ſenſe, we ſhall find it the moſt indiſpenſible requiſite of a woman; a thing ſo eſſential and natural to the ſex, that every the leaſt declination from it, is a proportionable receding from Womanhood, but the total abandoning it ranks them among Brutes, nay ſets them as far beneath thoſe, as an acquir'd vileneſs is below a native. I need make no collection of the verdicts either of the Philoſophers or Divines in the caſe, it being ſo much an inſtinct of nature, that tho too many make a ſhift to ſuppreſs it in themſelves, yet they cannot ſo darken the notion in others, but that an Impudent woman is lookt on as a kind of Monſter, a thing diverted and diſtorted from its proper form. That there is indeed a ſtrange repugnancy to nature, needs no other evidence then the ſtrugling, and difficulty in the firſt violations of Modeſty, which alwaies begin with regrets and bluſhes, and require a great deal of Self-denial, much of vicious Fortitude, to encounter with the recoilings and upbraidings of their own minds.

Guarded by natural baſhfulneſs.

18. I make no doubt but this age has arriv'd to as compendious arts of this kind, as induſtrious vice can ſuggeſt, and we have but too many inſtances of early proficients in this learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardeſt of them, whether at firſt they could not with more eaſe have kept their vertue then loſt it. Certainly ſuch are the Horrors and Shames that precede thoſe firſt Guilts, that they muſt commit a rape upon themſelves

ſelves (force their own reluctancies and averſions) before they can become willing proſtitutes to others. This their Seducers ſeem well to underſtand, and upon that ſcore are at the pains of ſo many preparatory courtings, ſuch expenſe of preſents too; as if this were ſo uncouth a crime, that there were no hope to introduce it but by a confederacy of ſom more familiar vices, their Pride or Covetouſneſs.

19. The beſt way therefore to countermine thoſe Stratagems of men, is for women to be ſuſpiciouſly vigilant even of the firſt approches. He that means to defend a Fort, muſt not abandon the Outworks, and ſhe that will ſecure her Chaſtity, muſt never let it come to too cloſe a ſiege, but repel the very firſt and moſt remote inſinuations of a Temter. Therefore when we ſpeak of Modeſty in our preſent notion of it, we are not to oppoſe it only to the groſſer act of Incontinency, but to all thoſe misbehaviors, which either diſcover or may create an inclination to it; of which ſort is all Lightneſs of carriage, wanton glances, obſcene diſcourſe; things that ſhew a woman ſo weary of her honor, that the next comer may reaſonably expect a ſurrender, and conſequently be invited to the Aſſault. Indeed they are ſuch, that one would rather think them the reſult of many acts, then merely the Prologue to one; and that nothing but a cuſtom of private ſin, could ſupply impudence enough to do what is ſo publicly ſcandalous; and where this is found in thoſe of any conſiderable age, charity it ſelf can ſcarce paſs a milder cenſure. Yet poſſibly in thoſe of the youngeſt ſort, they may at firſt be taken up (as their dreſs is) merely in imitation of others, embrac'd implicitly upon the autority of thoſe, whoſe examples govern the modes. When a poor girle, who has ſtill ſo much of the child as to admire every thing that glitters, ſees theſe things uſed by the gay people of the world, 'tis no wonder if ſhe take theſe as part of their accompliſhments, and upon peril of that formidable calamity of being unfaſhionable, conform to them. Which yet do's not ſo much extenuate the guilt of thoſe few ſeduced perſons, as it aggravates that of the Seducers, and atteſts the ſtrange corruption of the age, that thoſe things which the leſs hardened ſort of proſtitutes were formerly aſhamed of, ſhould now paſs into the frequency and avowedneſs of a faſhion, become a part of Diſcipline and Inſtitution of youth: as if vice now diſdain'd to have any punies in its ſchool, and therefore by a prepoſterous anticipation, makes its pupils begin where they were wont to end, initiates them at firſt into that ſhameleſneſs, which was wont to be the product only of a long habit. What the end will be of theſe Piqueerers in impudence, who thus put their vertue on the forlorn hope, is eaſie to divine. Yet is not this the only ſtate of danger: they who keep their ranks, and tho they do not provoke aſſaults, yet ſtay to receive them, may be far enough from ſafety. She that lends a patient ear to the praiſes of her Wit ot Beauty, intends at firſt perhaps only to gratify her vanity; but when ſhe is once charm'd with that Sirens ſong, bewitcht with that Flattery, ſhe inſenſibly declines to a kindneſs for that perſon that values her ſo much. And when that ſpark ſhall be blow'd up by perpetual remonſtrances of Paſſion, and perhaps little Romantic artifices of pretending to die for her, with a thouſand other tricks, which Luſt can ſuggeſt, 'twill like the *Naptha* Naturaliſts ſpeak of, in a moment grow to an unquenchable flame, to the ruin both of her Vertue and Honor.

The beſt way to ſecure the Fort of Modeſty is to preſerve the Out-works.

20. Let no woman therefore preſume upon the innocence of her firſt intentions; ſhe may as well upon confidence of a ſound conſtitution, enter a peſt-houſe and converſe with the plague, whoſe contagion do's not more

Innocence of the firſt intentions is not to be preſum'd upon.

more ſubtily inſinuate it ſelf, then this ſort of temtation. And as in that caſe ſhe would not ſtay to define what were the critical diſtance, at which ſhe might approch with ſafety, but would run as far from it as ſhe could; ſo in this, it no leſs concerns her, to remove her ſelf from the poſſibility of danger, and (how unfaſhionable ſoever it be) to put on ſuch a ſevere Modeſty, that her very looks ſhould guard her, and diſcourage the moſt impudent aſſailant. 'Tis ſaid of *Philopemen*, that the *Lacedemonians* finding it their intereſt to corrupt him with mony, they were yet ſo poſſeſt with the reverence of his vertues, that none durſt undertake to attaque him; and ſure 'twere not impoſſible for women to arrive at the ſame ſecurity. Such an autority there is in Vertue, that where 'tis eminent, 'tis apt to controle all looſe deſires, and he muſt not be only luſtful but ſacrilegious, that attemts to violate ſuch a Sanctuary.

They are miſerable trophies of Beauty that are built on the ruin of Vertue and Honor.

21. But perhaps that ſex may fear, that by putting on ſuch a Strictneſs, they ſhall looſe the glory of their Beauty, which is now chiefly eſtimated by the number of thoſe who court and adore them. To this in the firſt place I muſt ſay, that they are miſerable Trophies to Beauty that muſt be built on the ruins of Vertue and Honor; and ſhe that to boaſt the length of her hair ſhould hang her ſelf in it, would but act the ſame folly in a lower inſtance.

Beauty that is moſt reſerv'd, will be the more priz'd.

22. But then ſecondly, 'tis a great miſtake to think their Beauty ſhall be the leſs priz'd, ſince 'tis incident to mans nature to eſteem thoſe things moſt that are at a diſtance, whereas an eaſie and cheap deſcent begets contemt. So long as they govern themſelves by the exact rules of Prudence and Modeſty, their luſter is like the Meridian Sun in its clearneſs, which tho leſs approchable, is counted more glorious; but when they decline from thoſe, they are like that Sun in a cloud, which tho ſafelier gazed on, is not half ſo bright. But beſides theſe collateral advantages, 'tis certain that Modeſty gives an immediat and direct improvement to Beauty; for tho men for their own vicious ends wiſh them ſever'd, yet they cannot but think they are the moſt amiable when united, and you ſhall hear them often commend the aſpect of that Modeſty, which they would fain circumvent.

The woman who has loſt her honor, has loſt almoſt the poſſibility of a return to Vertue.

23. But in the third place, there is nothing but ſuch a Reſervedneſs that can indeed make their Beauty triumphant. Parly and conqueſt are the moſt diſtant things; and ſhe that deſcends to treat with an aſſailant, whatever he may tell her of his being her captive, 'tis but in order to the making her his; which when ſhe once is, there is no ſtate of ſervitude half ſo wretched, nothing in the world being ſo ſlaviſhly abject as a proſtitute woman. For beſides all the intereſt of another life which ſhe baſely reſigns, ſhe ſacrifices all that is valuable in this: her reputation ſhe puts wholly in his power that has debauched her, and which is worſe her reformation too. If ſhe ſhould have a mind to return to vertue, ſhe dares not for fear he ſhould divulge her former ſtrayings from it: ſo that, like *Catiline*, ſhe is engag'd to future evils to ſecure the paſt. Yea ſhe ſubjects her ſelf not only to his luſt, but to all his humors and fancies, nay even to all thoſe who have bin inſtrumental to their privacies, none of them all being to be diſpleas'd for fear of blabbing. And when 'tis remembred, what a ſort of cattel they are, which are the engines in ſuch affairs, there can ſcarce be any thing more deplorable then to be within their laſh. 'Tis true indeed, ſom have found a way to cure this uneaſineſs by being their own delators, not only confeſſing but boaſting their crime, and by an impudent owning prevent all accuſations: yet even this

this ſerves but to atteſt the intolerableneſs of the former condition, when this worſt of miſchiefs is choſe as a reſcue. Their impatience of being alwaies in aw, makes them take up that reſolution for infamy, which *Ceſar* did for death, who ſaid 'twas better to die once then to be alwaies in fear. And tho this deſperate remedy may cure the fear, yet it aſcertains the reproch; for whereas in the impeachment of others there is place for doubt, and charity may promt ſome to disbelieve it, yet when the fact is juſtified by the offender, the evidence is uncontrolable, and withal doubles the infamy. For beſides that which adheres to the crime, there is a diſtinct portion due to the impudence; yet, like the Scorpion, it muſt cure its own ſting, and tho it increaſes the obloquy, yet it deadens the ſenſe of it.

She paſſes thro ſeveral ſtages of guilt and miſery, to ſpeculative Atheiſm.

24. But when they have thus ſteel'd their forheads againſt all impreſſions of Shame, they are ſtill liable to many other painful effects of their ſin. What fears of being abandoned, what jealouſies of rivals do often torture them? And indeed not without ground: for they cannot but know, that the ſame humor of variety which engaged their Paramors in their love, may do the ſame for another, and another, and ſo on; it being as poſſible to graſp the air, as to confine a wandring luſt. Beſides, what anxious apprehenſions have they of the approch of age, which they are ſure will render them loathed and deſpicable, as alſo of all intermedial decaies of Beauty? How critically do they examin their glaſs? and every wrinkle that repreſents in their face, becomes a deep gaſh in the heart. But if they have at any time the leſure (or indeed the courage) to look inward, the view is yet more dreadful, a deform'd ſoul, ſpoil'd of its innocence, and rendred almoſt as brutiſh as the ſin it has conſented to. But tho it be in ſome reſpects *like the beaſt that periſheth*, it is not, it cannot be in that which would moſt avail it; an endleſs being it cannot loſe, nor can it expect any thing from that preeminence of its nature, but an infinity of miſery. This is ſuch an amazing contemplation, as, methinks, were it inſiſted on, ſhould allay the hotteſt blood; no impure flames being ſo fierce as to conteſt with thoſe of unquenchable fire. It is therefore tho a very impious, yet no unskilful artifice of thoſe who would vitiate women in their Manners, to corrupt them in their Principles, and by extinguiſhing all hopes or fears of another World, perſwade them to immerſe boldly into all the abominations of this. 'Tis ſaid, this is now an art of wooing, the modern preludium to the baſeſt propoſals. It ſeems this age dares not truſt only to the former waies of ſeducement, fears there will not be women enough that will forget the intereſts of another World; and therefore is fain to ſet up a new party of others to disbelieve it. And I fear that deſign has bin too proſperous; many women are ſo much more concerned for their bodies then their ſouls, that they are contented the one ſhould be elevated upon the depreſſion and debaſement of the other; and whilſt with a vain tranſport, they can hear their outward form applauded, as Angelical, or Divine, they can very tamely endure to have their better part vilified and deſpiſed, defin'd to be only a puff of air in their noſtrils, which will ſcatter with their expiring breath, or in the Atheiſts phraſe, *Wiſd.* 2. 3. *vaniſh as the ſoft air.* Whereas they ſhould conſider, that they who preach this Doctrin to them, deſign it only to infer a pernicious Uſe. 'Tis a Maxim in Politics, that thoſe counſels are ſuſpiciouſly to be ſcan'd, which carry in their front the adviſers intereſt; which certainly is never more viſible then in this caſe, he that once gains this point, never needing to conteſt for all the reſt. For he that can

perſwade a woman out of her ſoul, will ſoon command her body; and then what was at firſt his intereſt, becomes hers at laſt; and her wiſhes of the mortality of her ſoul, are much ſtronger then 'tis poſſible her belief of it could be: which confirms abundantly my affirmation of the ſervile, wretched condition of ſuch a perſon. For if we judg that a very ſevere ſlavery which makes people deſirous to reſign a temporal being, what ſhall we think of that which provokes them to renounce an eternal?

Nothing can be more deplorable then the ſtate of them who have abandoned their Vertue.

25. And now by this gradation of miſchiefs we may judg of the deplorable ſtate of thoſe who have abandoned their Vertue; wherein I doubt not the conſciences of many cannot only atteſt, but much improve the deſcription; and all I ſhall ſay to ſuch, is, only to conſult that boſom monitor, which till they do, all Homilies will be inſignificant. My deſign was not therefore to tell them what they too well feel, but only to point out their wracks as warnings to others.

It concerns thoſe who are untainted, to conſider the miſeries of the other condition.

26. Let all thoſe therefore who are yet untainted, and by being ſo, have their judgments clear and unbiaſt, conſider ſoberly the miſery of the other condition, and that not only to applaud, but ſecure their own; and when ever the outward pomps and gaudy ſplendors of a vitiated woman ſeem, like that of *Creſus*, to boaſt their happineſs, let them look thro that Fallacy, and anſwer with *Solon*, *that thoſe only are happy who are ſo at their end.* Their moſt exquiſit deckings are but like the garlands on a beaſt deſign'd for Sacrifice; their richeſt gems are but the chains, not of their ornament but ſlavery; and their gorgeous apparel, like that of *Herod*, covers perhaps a putrid body, (for even that doth not ſeldom prove their fate) or however, a more putrid ſoul. They who can thus conſider them, will avoid one great ſnare; for 'tis not alwaies ſo much the luſt of the fleſh, as that of the eies which betraies a woman. 'Tis the known infirmity of the Sex, to love gaiety, and a ſplendid appearance, which renders all temtations of that ſort ſo connatural to them, that thoſe who are not arrived to a more ſober eſtimate of things, will ſcarce be ſecure. It will therefore be neceſſary for them to regulate their opinions, and reduce all ſuch things to their juſt value, and then they will appear ſo trifling, that they can never maintain any competition with the more ſolid intereſts of Vertue and Honor. For tho thoſe terms ſeem in this looſe age to be exploded; yet where the things are viſible they extort a ſecret veneration, even from thoſe who think it their concern publicly to deride them: whereas on the other ſide a defection from them expoſes to all the contemt imaginable, renders them deſpis'd even by thoſe who betraid them to it, leaves a perpetual blot upon their Names, and their Family. For in the character of a woman, let Wit and Beauty, and all female accompliſhments ſtand in the front, yet if wantonneſs bring up the rear, the Satyr ſoon devours the Panegyric, and (as in an Echo) the laſt words only will reverberate, and her vice will be remembred when all the reſt will be forgot. But I need not declame upon this theme; the Son of *Syrach* has don it to my hand, in many paſſages, but eſpecially *Eccluſ.* 23. to which I refer the Reader.

A moſt important means of preſerving Modeſty, is a judicious choice of company.

27. What hath bin already ſaid, is, I ſuppoſe, ſufficient to convince every woman how much it is her concern to keep her ſelf ſtrictly within the bounds of Modeſty and Vertue. In order to which, there is nothing more important then a judicious choice of their Company; I mean not only for men, but women alſo. Vice is contagious, and this eſpecially has that worſt quality of the Plague, that 'tis malicious, and would infect others. A woman that knows her ſelf ſcandalous, thinks ſhe is reprocht by the vertue of another, looks on her as one that is *made to reprove her waies*, as it is,

is, *Wiſd.* 2. 14. and therefore in her own defence ſtrives to level the inequality, not by reforming her ſelf, (that ſhe thinks too hard a task) but by corrupting the other. To this end, ſuch as are willing to ſcrew themſelves into an acquaintance, will be officiouſly kind, and by all arts of condeſcention and obliging, endevor to enſnare a woman of reputation into their intimacy. And if they ſucceed, if they can but once entangle her into that cobweb-friendſhip; they then, ſpider-like, infuſe their venom, never leave their vile inſinuations till they have poiſoned and ruined her. But and if on the other ſide they meet with one of too much ſagacity to be ſo entrap'd; if they cannot taint her Innocence, they will endevor to blaſt her Fame; repreſent her to the World to be what they would have made her, that is in the Pſalmiſts phraſe, *ſuch an one as themſelves, Pſal.* 50. 24. ſo that there is no converſing with them, but with a manifeſt peril either of Vertue or Honor, which ſhould methinks be a ſufficient diſſuaſive. 'Tis true, 'tis not alwaies in ones power to ſhun the meeting with ſuch perſons, they are too numerous, and too intruding to be totally avoided; unleſs, as St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* 5. 10. *one ſhould go out of the World.* But all voluntary converſe ſuppoſes a choice, and therefore every body that will may refrain that, may keep on the utmoſt frontiers of civility, without ever ſuffering any approch towards intimacy and familiarity.

28. And ſure were this diſtance duly obſerv'd, it might be of excellent uſe, a kind of lay Excommunication, which might come very ſeaſonably to ſupply the want of the Eccleſiaſtic now out-dated. And this ſeems very well to agree with the ſenſe of *Solon*, the wiſe *Athenian* Law-giver, who, beſides that he ſhut the Temple-doors againſt them, interdicted them the ſacred Aſſemblies; made it one of his laws, that an Adultereſs ſhould not be permitted to wear any ornaments, that ſo they might in their dreſs carry the note of their infamy. Should we have the like diſtinction obſerved, I fear many of our gaieſt birds would be unplumed, and tho the ſame be not now an expedient practicable, yet the former is, and might be of very good uſe. For beſides that already mentioned of ſecuring the innocent, it might perhaps have a good effect on the guilty, who could not but reflect with ſome ſhame on themſelves, if they were thus ſingled out and diſcriminated; whereas whilſt they are ſuffered to mix with the beſt Societies, (like hurt Deer in an herd) they flatter themſelves they are undiſcernable.

Were the vertuous ſly herein, it might be a means of reclaiming thoſe that have bin looſe.

29. But indeed the advantage of this courſe is yet more extenſive, and would reach the whole Sex, which now ſeems to lie under a general ſcandal, for the fault of particular perſons. We know any conſiderable number of ſmutty ears caſts a blackneſs on the whole field, which yet were they apart, would perhaps not fill a ſmall corner of it; and in this uncharitable age, things are apt to be denominated not from the greater but worſer part: whereas, were the precious ſevered from the vile, by ſome note of diſtinction, there might then a more certain eſtimate be made: and I cannot be ſo ſevere to womankind, as not to believe the ſcandalous part would then make but a ſmall ſhew which now makes ſo great a noiſe.

It would alſo redeem the Sex from the general ſcandal that lies upon it.

30. Beſides this I can ſuggeſt but one way more for women of honor to vindicate their ſex, and that is by making their own vertue as illuſtrious as they can; and by the bright ſhine of that, draw off mens eies from the worſer proſpect. And to this there is requir'd not only innocency, but prudence; to abſtain, as from all real evil, ſo *from the appearance of it too*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 22. not, by any doubtful or ſuſpicious action, to give any umbrage

That the honor of women may be ſafe, there is need not only of innocence but alſo prudence.

brage for cenſure, but as the Apoſtle ſaies in another caſe, 2 *Cor.* 11. 11. *to cut off occaſion from them that deſire occaſion*; to deny themſelves the moſt innocent liberties, when any ſcandalous inference is like to be deduc'd from them. And tho perhaps no caution is enough to ſecure againſt the malicious, and the jealous; tho 'tis poſſible ſome black mouth may aſperſe them, yet they have ſtill *Plato's* reſerve, who being told of ſome who had defam'd him, *'tis no matter ſaid he, I will live ſo that none ſhall believe them.* If their lives be ſuch, that they may acquit themſelves to the ſober and unprejudiced, they have all the ſecurity can be aſpir'd to in this world; the more evincing atteſtation they muſt attend from the unerring Tribunal hereafter; where there lies a certain appeal for all injur'd perſons who can calmly wait for it.

SECT. II.

Of Meekneſs.

Meekneſs is a feminine vertue, pointed to by nature in the compoſition of the Sex.

1. IN the next place we may rank Meekneſs as a neceſſary feminine Vertue; this even Nature ſeems to teach, which abhors monſtroſities and diſproportions, and therefore having allotted to women a more ſmooth and ſoft compoſition of body, infers thereby her intention, that the mind ſhould correſpond with it. For tho the adulterations of art can repreſent in the ſame Face beauty in one poſition, and deformity in another; yet nature is more ſincere, and never meant a ſerene and clear forehead ſhould be the frontiſpiece to a cloudy tempeſtuous heart. 'Tis therefore to be wiſht they would take the admonition, and whilſt they conſult their glaſſes, whether to applaud or improve their outward form, they would caſt one look inwards, and examin what ſymmetry is there held with a fair outſide; whether any ſtorm of paſſion darken and overcaſt their interior beauty, and uſe at leaſt an equal diligence to reſcue that, as they would to clear their face from any ſtain or blemiſh.

Particularly enjoin'd by religion.

2. But it is not nature only which ſuggeſts this, but the God of nature too, Meekneſs being not only recommended to all as a Chriſtian Vertue, but particularly enjoin'd to women as a peculiar accompliſhment of their Sex, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. where after the mention of all the exquiſit and coſtly deckings of art, this one *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*, is confronted to them, with this eminent atteſtation, that it is *in the ſight of God of great price*, and therefore to all who will not enter diſpute with God, and conteſt his judgment, it muſt be ſo too. Now, tho Meekneſs be in it ſelf a ſingle entire Vertue, yet it is diverſifi'd, according to the ſeveral faculties of the ſoul, over which it has influence; ſo that there is a Meekneſs of the Underſtanding, a Meekneſs of the Will, and a Meekneſs of the Affections; all which muſt concur to make up the Meek and quiet ſpirit.

1. Meekneſs of Underſtanding.

3. And firſt for the Meekneſs of the Underſtanding, it conſiſts in a pliableneſs to conviction, and is directly oppoſit to that ſullen adherence obſervable in too many; who judg of tenets not by their conformity to truth and reaſon, but to their prepoſſeſſions, and tenaciouſly retain'd opinions, only becauſe they (or ſome in whom they confide) have once own'd them;

them; and certainly ſuch a temper is of all others the moſt obſtructive to Wiſdom. This puts them upon the chance of a Lottery, and what they firſt happen to draw, determines them meerly upon the priviledg of its precedency, ſo that had *Mahomet* firſt ſeiz'd them, his tenure would have bin as indefeſable as Chriſt's now. How great the force of ſuch prejudices are, we may ſee by the oppoſitions it rais'd againſt Chriſtian Doctrin in groſs at its firſt promulgation; the Jews blind Zeal for the Traditions of their Fathers, engaging them in the murder even of that very Meſſias whom thoſe Traditions had taught them to expect, and after in the perſecution of that Doctrin which his Reſurrection had ſo irrefragably atteſted. And to juſtify the propriety of this obſervation, to thoſe I now write to, 'tis expreſly affirm'd, *Acts* 13.50. That they made uſe of the zeal of the female Proſelytes for that purpoſe. *The* Jews *ſtirred up the devout and honorable women, and rais'd a perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas. So that 'tis no unſeaſonable advice to ſuch, to be ſure they ſee well their way before they run too fierce a carriere in it; otherwiſe the greateſt heat without light, do's but reſemble that of the bottomleſs pit, where flames and darkneſs do at once cohabit.

It avoids the extremes of ſtifneſs and eaſineſs.

4. But whilſt I decry this prejudicate ſtifneſs, I intend not to plead for its contrary extreme, and recommend a too eaſy Flexibility; which is a temper of equal, if not more ill conſequence then the former. The adhering to one opinion can expoſe but to one error, but a mind that lies open to the effluxes of all new tenets, may ſucceſſively entertain a whole ocean of deluſions; and to be thus yielding, is not a Meekneſs, but ſervileneſs of Underſtanding. Indeed 'tis ſo great a weakneſs of mind, that the Apoſtle ſinks it ſomwhat below the impotence of women, and reſembles it to that of children, *Eph.* 4. 14. yet it ſeems the folly of ſome women had levell'd them with children in this matter, for the ſame Apoſtle takes notice of ſuch, to whom as he gives the Epithet of ſilly, ſo the latter part of the Character ſpeaks them incorrigibly ſo, *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledg of the truth,* 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. a deſcription which if we compare with our times, we muſt think prophetic. For how many inſtances hath this age given us of women ſo led captive; who being either affected with the novelty, or ſeduced by the pretended zeal of a new teacher, have given up their underſtandings to him: and for a while this ſtrong man has kept poſſeſſion, but when a ſtronger then he hath come, it has fared as with him in the Goſpel, a louder Zeal, or a newer Doctrin ſoon divides his ſpoils; and that by force of the very ſame principle on which he ſet up, which within a while undermines the latter alſo, and ſo ſucceſſively, till the poor proſelyte has bin hurried thro all the mazes of wild error, and at laſt perhaps (like a palat diſtracted by too much variety) ſhe fixes upon that which at firſt ſhe moſt decried. This has bin eventually true in ſome, who ſetting out in the fierceſt deteſtation of Popery, have wandred ſo long like the blinded *Syrians,* 2 *Kings* 6. 20. that they have at laſt found themſelves in the midſt of *Samaria*; by an inſenſible circular motion bin brought about to that Religion, from which alone they deſign'd to fly. So little do itching ears know whether they may be carried: and indeed the ear when infected with that prurient humor, may vie Miſchiefs with the tongue, which St. *James* tells us, *Chap.* 3. 15. *is* (tho a little member) *a world of iniquity.*

Women by the opinion of their eaſineſs, are rendred more expos'd to ſeduction.

5. 'Tis therefore the moſt important concern of all, to fortifie that ſo affailable part; but 'tis eſpecially ſo of women, not only in reſpect of that natural imbecillity, which renders them liable to ſeducement, but alſo

becauſe the opinion of their being ſo, makes them particularly aim'd at by ſeducers. For, as he who is to put off adulterated wares, will chuſe the moſt unwary chapmen, ſo theſe Sophiſticators of Divinity deſire the moſt undiſcerning Auditors. And truly that ſo many of that Sex are ſo, I do not ſo much impute to any natural defect, as to the looſe notions they have of Religion, of which they have perhaps ſome general confuſed apprehenſions, but have ſo little penetrated the depth of it, that they know not why they are *Chriſtians* rather then *Turks*, why of the Church of *England* rather then that of *Rome*, or *Geneva*. And while they are thus unfixt, and have no better principle then Cuſtom and Compliance; they have nothing to anſwer to any the groſſeſt deceit that can be obtruded upon them, which for ought they know or have conſider'd, may be as true as any thing they formerly profeſt. Now when any one in this condition ſhall be aſſaulted, not only by the repeated importunities of falſe teachers, but alſo by ingeminated threatnings of hell and damnation; ſhe is like one awaked by the outcry of fire, and in that amaze will be apt to run where-ever the firſt diſcoverer of her danger ſhall lead her.

The beſt antidote a ainſt novel doctrines, is to underſtand the grounds of the old.

6. I ſhall therefore moſt earneſtly recommend it as the beſt Antidote againſt the poiſon of novel Doctrins, to examin well the grounds of the old. For want of this it is that our Church has bin expoſed to ſo many frivolous cavils, it being too incident to the perverſe pride of human nature, to ſpeak evil of things we underſtand not. And had our ſhe-zealots firſt conſulted ſome ſober guides, and from them underſtood upon what grounds the Practice as well as Doctrin of our Church was founded, they could not ſo eaſily have bin carried away *by every wind of Doctrin*, as the Apoſtle phraſes it, *Eph.* 4. 14.

Common juſtice obliges to hear, before we condemn.

7. Indeed this is no more then common juſtice exacts, which forbids the condemning even the vileſt malefactor unheard, (and unheard and not underſtood, are in this caſe terms equivalent) yet ſure they owe ſomthing more to that Church from whoſe miniſtry themſelves muſt confeſs to have derived their Chriſtianity, in whoſe boſom they have bin cheriſht, and conſequently may plead a mothers right in them. So that unleſs poſſeſſion, which fortifies civil rights, deſtroies the Eccleſiaſtic; ſhe may challenge beſides that natural juſtice, (which is the common due of Humanity) a parental reſpect and reverence, a debt which is ſure very ill anſwered by thoſe who caſt off her obedience before they have at all conſidered what it is ſhe commands. And if the abdicating a child be a thing ſo unnatural, as needs ſome very important cauſe to juſtifie it; the renouncing of a Parent muſt require a reaſon as far tranſcending that, as the guilt do's, if it be cauſleſs; and ſuch it muſt inevitably be in all, who for want of due examination, ſuffer themſeves to be lead into groundleſs prejudices and diſguſts.

Women of quality cannot better employ their leſure, then in looking into the grounds of the religion they profeſs.

8. To prevent that guilt, and a multitude of others which ſpring from it, I muſt again repeat my Propoſal, that women of Quality (who are preſumed to want neither Parts nor leſure for it) would a little look into the inſide of the Religion they profeſs: if it be a true one, 'twill bear the inſpection, truth never ſhunning the light; if it be not, the diſcovery cannot be too early. And indeed among the many remarkable impreſſes of truth our Church bears, this is one, that ſhe do's not blindfold her Proſelytes, leaves them the uſe of their diſcerning Faculty, and do's not by obtruding upon them an implicit belief, force them to lay down their Reaſon when they take up their Faith. And now why ſhould not Ladies ſpend a few of their many idle hours in this inquiſition, I mean, not to

embark

embark themſelves in a maze of controverſies, but only to diſcern thoſe plain grounds of Truth on which our Church builds; which if well digeſted, will prove a better amulet againſt deluſion then the reading whole *Tomes* of Diſputations, more apt to diſtract then fortify their underſtandings. And had they thus don, had their minds bin ballaſted by ſober principles, ſo many of them had never made up the triumphs of ſo many and ſo various ſeducers. And tho to ſuch this advertiſement may come too late (like aſſiſtance after a defeat) yet it may be a ſeaſonable caution to others, and to thoſe I offer it, as that very temper wherein conſiſts that rational Meekneſs of the Underſtanding I would recommend to them, which is equally violated by a blind Obſtinacy, or as blind a Flexibility.

2. Meekneſs of Will, which is regulated by the will of God in things ſupernatural.

9. A ſecond ſort of Meekneſs is that of the Will, which lies in its juſt ſubordination, and ſubmiſſion to a more ſupream Autority, which in Divine things is the Will of God; in Natural or Moral, right Reaſon; and in human Conſtitutions, the command of Superiors. And ſo long as the Will governs it ſelf by theſe in their reſpective Orders, it tranſgreſſes not the Meekneſs requir'd of it. But experience atteſts, that the Will is now in its depravation an imperious Faculty, apt to caſt off that ſubjection to which it was deſign'd; and act independently from thoſe motives which ſhould influence it. This God knows is too common in all Ages, all Conditions, and Sexes: but the Feminine lies more eſpecially under an ill name for it. Whether that have grown from the low opinion conceived of their Reaſon, leſs able to maintain its Empire, or from the multipli'd habitual inſtances themſelves have given of unruly Wills, I ſhall not undertake to determin; but either way 'tis, I am ſure, ſo great a reproch, as they ſhould be very induſtrious to wipe off. And truly I know nothing more incentive to that endevor, then the having a right eſtimate of the Happineſs as well as Vertue of a governable Will. How calmly do thoſe glide thro all (even the rougheſt) events, that can but maſter that ſtubborn Faculty? A will reſign'd to God's, how do's it enervate and enfeeble any calamity? Nay indeed it triumphs over it, and by that conjunction with him that ordains it, may be ſaid to command even what it ſuffers. 'Twas a Philoſophical Maxim, that a Wiſe moral man could not be injured, could not be miſerable. But ſure 'tis much more true of him who has that Divine Wiſdom of Chriſtian reſignation, that twiſts and inwraps all his choices with God's, and is neither at the pains nor hazard of his own elections; but is ſecure, that unleſs Omniſcience can be deceived, or Omnipotence defeated, he ſhall have what is really beſt for him.

By reaſon in things natural.

10. Proportionable (tho not equal) to this, is the happineſs of a Will regulated by Reaſon in things within its Sphere: 'tis the dignity of human Nature, and that which diſtinguiſhes it from that of Beaſts. Yea, even thoſe grow more contemtible in their kinds, the farther they are removed from it. The ſtupid ſturdineſs of an Aſs has render'd it Proverbial for folly, when the tractableneſs of other Animals has temted ſome to liſt them among Rationals. Beſides, Reaſon affords ſomthing of a Baſis and Foundation for the Will to bottom on. He that governs himſelf by Reaſon (that being ſtill the ſame) will act equally and conſonant to himſelf; but he that do's a thing this moment, only becauſe he will, may the next have as weighty an argument to do ſomthing quite contrary; and ſo may ſpend his whole time in unravelling his *Spiders webs*, as the Prophet rightly calls the vain deſigns of ſuch brutiſh men, *Iſa.* 59. 5. Not to ſpeak of thoſe recoilings and upbraidings of the rational faculties, which

which are the uneasy attendants of those who resist its more direct admonitions; there is nothing exposes to more secular ruins. An ungovernable Will is the most precipitous thing imaginable, and like the Devil in the Swine, hurries headlong to destruction; and yet deprives one of that poor reserve, that faint comfort of the miserable, Pity; which will not be so much invited by the misery, as averted by that wilfulness which caused it. Nay indeed, so little can such persons expect the compassion of others, that 'twill be hard for them to afford themselves their own: the consciousness that their calamities are but the issues of their own perverseness, being apt to dispose them more to hate then pity. And this is no small accumulation of wretchedness, when a man suffers not only directly, but at the rebound too; reinflicts his miseries upon himself by a grating reflection on his own madness. Yea, so great an aggravation is it, that even Hell it self is enhaunced and compleated by it; all the torments there being edged and sharpned by the woful remembrance, that they might once have bin avoided.

In civil offices by the will of Superiors.

11. In the last place a Will duly submissive to lawful Superiors, is not only an amiable thing in the eies of others, but exceedingly happy to ones self; 'tis the parent of peace and order both public and private. A blessing so considerable, as is very cheaply bought with a little receding from ones own will or humor: whereas the contrary temper is the spring and original of infinit confusions, the grand incendiary which sets Kingdoms, Churches, Families, in combustion; a flat contradiction not only to the word, but even the works of God; a kind of Anticreative power, which reduces things to that Chaos from whence God drew them. Our age has given us too many and too pregnant instances of its mischievous effects, which may serve to enhaunce the value of that governable malleable temper I now recommend. And as a Will thus resign'd to Reason and just Autority, is a felicity all rational natures should aspire to; so especially the feminine Sex, whose passions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more strictly guarded and kept under the severe discipline of Reason; for where 'tis otherwise, where a woman has no guide but her Will, and her Will is nothing but her Humor, the event is sure to be fatal to her self, and often to others also.

The restraint o the will, is a happy imposition.

12. And the hazard of this renders that other restraint of the will, I mean that of obedience to Superiors, a very happy imposition; tho perhaps 'tis not alwaies thought so, for those who resist the government of Reason, are not very apt to submit to that of Autority. Yet sure God and nature do attest the particular expediency of this to women, by having placed that Sex in a degree of inferiority to the other. Nay farther 'tis observable, that as there are but three states of life, thro which they can regularly pass, *viz.* Virginity, Marriage, and Widowhood; two of them are states of Subjection, the first to the parent, the second to the husband; and the third, as it is casual, whether ever they arrive to it or no, so if they do, we find it by God himself reckon'd as a condition the most desolate and deplorable. If I should say this happens upon that very score that they are left to their own guidance, the sad wracks of many would too much justify the gloss; but however it evinces, that God sets not the same value upon their being masterless, which some of them do, whilst he reckons them most miserable, when they are most at liberty.

Submission is by God's assignment the lot of women.

13. And since Gods assignation has thus determined subjection to be the womens lot, there needs no other argument of its fitness, or for their acquiescence. Therefore when ever they oppose it, the contumacy flies higher

er then the immediat Superior, and reaches God himſelf. And I am apt to think there would not many of that timorous Sex dare ſo far, were it not for ſome falſe punctillioes of honor, which (like thoſe among our Duelliſts) have impoſed themſelves. Theſe repreſent Meekneſs and Submiſſion as a ſilly ſheepiſh quality unfit for women of breeding and ſpirit: whilſt an imperious obſtinacy paſſes for nobleneſs and greatneſs of mind. But alas they are wofully miſtaken in their notion of a great ſpirit, which conſiſts in ſcorning to do unworthy and vile things, and couragiouſly encountering the adverſe events of life, not in ſpurning at duty, or ſeeking to pull themſelves from that Sphere where the divine Wiſdom hath placed them. No ſure, ſtubborneſs is the mark only of a great ſtomack, not of a great mind; and the cruelty of a coward may as well denominate him valiant, as the ungovernableneſs of a woman can ſpeak her generous.

Nothing is more odious then an imperious woman.

14. In this I preſume I ſpeak the common ſenſe of all; for what value ſoever they put upon themſelves, nothing renders them leſs acceptable to others; an imperious woman being a plague to her relatives, and a deriſion to ſtrangers, yea and a torment to her ſelf: every the leaſt contradiction (which a meek perſon would paſs over inſenſibly) inflaming ſuch an unruly temper, and tranſporting her to ſuch extravagances, as often produce very miſchievous effects. On the other ſide if ſhe be humor'd and complied with, that ſerves only to make her more inſolent and intolerable; makes her humors grow to ſuch an height, that ſhe knows not her ſelf what would pleaſe her, and yet expects that others ſhould: ſo that to ſuch a one, we may apply what *Hannibal* ſaid of *Marcellus*, that if he were vanquiſh'd, he never gave reſt to himſelf, nor if he were victorious, to others. Certainly the uneaſineſs of a perverſe ſpirit is ſo great, that could ſuch come but to compare it with the calm and happy ſerenity of Meekneſs and Obedience, there would need no other Lecture to commend them to their eſteem or practice.

3. Meekneſs of Affections.

15. The laſt branch of Meekneſs is that of Affections, and conſiſts in reducing the paſſions to a temper and calmneſs, not ſuffering them to make uproars within to diſturb ones ſelf, nor without to the diſquieting of others; and to this regulation Meekneſs is generally ſubſervient. Yet becauſe the correcting of ſome particular paſſions are more immediatly aſſignable to other vertues, I ſhall inſiſt only upon that, on which this has a more direct and peculiar influence, I mean Anger, a two edged paſſion, which whilſt it deals its blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The commotion and vexation which an angry man feels, is far more painful then any thing he can ordinarily inflict upon another: herein juſtifying the Epithet uſually given to Anger, that it is a ſhort madneſs; for who that were in his right wits, would incur a greater miſchief to do a leſs. It is indeed ſo great a diſtemper of the mind, that he that is poſſeſt with it is incompetent for any ſober undertaking, and ſhould as much be ſuſpended from acting, as one in a Phrenſie or Lunacy. This was the judgment and practice too of *Plato*, who going to chaſtiſe a ſervant, and finding himſelf grow angry, ſtopt his correction; a friend coming in and asking what he was doing, *puniſhing*, replies he, *an angry man*, as thinking himſelf unfit to diſcipline another, till he had ſubdued his own paſſion. Another time his ſlave having offended him, *I would beat thee*, ſaies he, *but that I am angry*. It were endleſs indeed to recite the black Epithets given by all Moraliſts to this vice. It ſhall ſuffice to take the ſuffrage of the Wiſeſt of men, one that had acquainted himſelf to *know madneſs and folly*, *Eccl.* 1. 17. and we find it his ſentence, that *anger reſts in the boſom of fools*, *Eccl.* 7. 11.

Violent paſſion moſt indecent in women.

16. And what is thus univerſally unbecoming to human nature, cannot ſure be leſs indecent for the gentler Sex: 'tis rather more ſo, every thing contracting ſo much more of deformity, by how much it recedes from its proper kind. Now nature hath befriended women with a more cool and temperate conſtitution, put leſs of fire and conſequently of choler, in their compoſitions; ſo that their heats of that kind are adventitious and preternatural, rais'd often by fancy or pride, and ſo both look more unhandſomly, and have leſs of pretence to veil and cover them. Beſides women have a native feebleneſs, unable to back and aſſert their angers with any effective force, which may admoniſh them 'twas never intended they ſhould let looſe to that paſſion, which nature ſeems by that very unability to have interdicted them. But when they do it, they render themſelves at once deſpis'd and abhor'd; nothing being more ridiculouſly hateful, then an impotent rage.

Eſpecially when it breaks out in clamors and ſcolding.

17. But as the moſt feeble inſect may ſomtimes diſturb, tho not much hurt us, ſo there is one feminine weapon which as 'tis alwaies ready, ſo proves often troubleſom, I mean the Tongue, which, tho in its loudeſt clamors can naturally invade nothing but the ear, yet even that is a moleſtation. The barking of a dog, tho we are ſecure he cannot bite, is a grating unpleſant ſound; and while women ſeek that way to vent their rage, they are but a ſort of ſpeaking brutes, and ſhould conſider whether that do not reflect more contemt upon themſelves, then their moſt virulent reproches can fix upon others.

Which tho formidable, makes no advantage.

18. But ſome things have had the luck to acquire a formidableneſs no body knows how, and ſure there is no greater inſtance of it then in this caſe. A clamorous woman is lookt on, tho not with reverence, yet with much dread; and we often find things don to prevent or appeaſe her ſtorms, which would be denied to the calm and rational deſires of a meeker perſon. And perhaps ſuch ſucceſſes have not bin a little acceſſory to the fomenting the humor: yet ſure it gives them little cauſe of triumph, when they conſider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yea intolerable) for human ſociety; let them take the verdict of *Solomon* who declares it *better to dwell in a corner of a houſe top, then with a brawling woman in a wide houſe, Prov.* 25. 24. Nor do's the ſon of *Sirac* ſpeak leſs ſharply tho more ironically, *Eccluſ.* 26. 27. *A loud crying woman and a ſcold, ſhall be ſought out to drive away the enemy.* And tho he taxes the feminine vices impartially enough, yet there is ſcarce any of them which he more often and more ſeverely brands then this of unquietneſs. It ſeems 'twas a thing generally lookt on, as very inſufferable; as appears by *Socrates*, who when he deſign'd to diſcipline himſelf to perfect patience and tolerance, knew no better way of exerciſe, then to get a ſhrew to his wife, an excellence that may perhaps again recommend a woman, when we fall to an age of Philoſophers; but at preſent 'twill be hard for any of our *Xantippes* to find a *Socrates*; and therefore that quality is as deſtructive to their intereſts in getting husbands, as it is to the husbands quiet when he is got. But I preſume I need not declame further againſt this fault, which I ſuppoſe cannot be frequent among that rank of women to whom this Tract is intended: for if neither moral nor divine Conſiderations have prevented it, yet probably civility and a gentile education hath: a ſcold being a creature to be lookt for only in Stalls and Markets, not among perſons of quality. Yet if there be any that have deſcended to ſo ſordid a practice, they have ſo far degraded themſelves, that they are not to wonder if others ſubſtract that reſpect, which upon other accounts they might demand.

19. And

19. And to ſuch I ſhould recommend the uſual method of Phyſic, which is to cure by revulſion, let that ſharp humor which ſo habitually flows to the tongue, be taught a little to recoile, and work inward; and inſtead of reviling others, diſcipline and correct themſelves: let them upbraid their own madneſs, that to gratifie an impotent, nay a moſt painful paſſion, have degenerated from what their nature, their qualities, their education, deſign'd them. And if they can thus reverſe their diſpleſures, 'twill not only ſecure others from all their indecent aſſaults, but it will at laſt extinguiſh them. For Anger is corroſive, and if it be kept only to feed upon its ſelf, muſt be its own devourer; if it be permitted to fetch no forrage from without, nor to nouriſh it ſelf with ſuſpicions and ſurmiſes of others, nor to make any ſallies at the tongue, it cannot long hold out.

They whoſe angers are thus impotent againſt others, ſhould turn the fury on themſelves.

20. And how much they will herein conſult their intereſt and their reputation too, they may be taught by *Solomon*, who makes it the diſtinctive *ſign of a fooliſh woman to be clamorous*, *Prov.* 9. 13. whereas when he gives the character of his Excellent woman, he links Wiſdom and Gentleneſs together, *ſhe openeth her mouth with wiſdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindneſs*, *Prov.* 31. 26. If this verdict may be admitted (as ſure it ought, whether we conſider his wiſdom, or dear bought experience in women) it will confute the common plea of querulous ſpirits, who think to ſeem inſenſible of any the leaſt provocation, is to appear ſilly and ſtupid; tho truly if it were ſo, 'twould be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, as they commonly do in the tranſport of their fury.

To be clamorous is a ſign of folly.

21. To conclude, Meekneſs is ſo amiable, ſo indearing a quality, and ſo peculiarly embelliſhing to women, that did they but all conſider it with half the attention they do their more trivial exterior ornaments, 'twould certainly be taken up as the univerſal mode, in all the ſeveral variations of it this Section has preſented.

Were the beauty of Meekneſs conſider'd, it would be taken up inſtead of other ornaments.

SECT. III.

Of Compaſſion.

1. OF near Affinity to the Vertue of Meekneſs, is that of Mercy and Compaſſion, which indeed can ſcarce thrive in any place where the former hath not prepared the ſoil: Anger and Obſtinacy being like that rough Eaſt-wind which brought the Egyptian Locuſts, *Exod.* 10. 13. to eat up every green thing in the Land. A mind haraſſed with its own impatiency, is not at leſure to obſerve, much leſs to condole the calamities of others. But as a calm and clear day befriends us with a more diſtinct Proſpect of diſtant Objects; ſo when all is quiet and ſerene within us, we can then look about us, and diſcern what exigencies of others invite our pity.

Compaſſion is a feminine vertue, that has an affinity to Meekneſs.

2. I need not ſay much to raiſe an eſtimate of this Vertue, ſince 'tis ſo eſſential to our Nature, ſo interwoven in the compoſition of Humanity, that we find in Scripture phraſe, Compaſſion is generally ſeated in the moſt inward ſenſible part of our frame, the bowels. So *Col.* 3. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of mercy*; and *Phil.* 2. 1. *Bowels and mercies.* So that a cruel ruthleſs perſon unmans himſelf, and is by the common vote of man-

'Tis a vertue ſeated in our moſt inward ſenſible part, our bowels.

kind to be liſted among brutes; nay, not among the better, but only the more hateful, noxious ſort of them.

'Tis moſt connatural to the female Sex.

3. But this is yet more unnatural in the female Sex, which being of ſofter mold, is more pliant and yielding to the impreſſions of pity, and by the ſtrength of fancy redoubles the horror of any ſad object. Yea ſo remarkable is this tenderneſs, that God, when he would moſt magnify his own compaſſion, illuſtrates it by that of women, as the higheſt human inſtance. Indeed ſuch a propenſion have women to commiſeration, that they are uſually taxed with an exceſs in it; ſo that any imprudent lenity is Proverbially called, A womaniſh Pity, and therefore it may be thought an impertinence to exhort them to that which they can ſcarce avoid. But to this I anſwer; firſt, that in this degenerous age, 'tis no news to ſee people violate their inſtincts, as well as their duties, and be worſe then their nature inclines them; many ſins being committed even againſt the grain, and with violence to conſtitution.

Is not a melting of the eies, or yerning of the bowels, but a charitable concern to help and relieve.

4. Yet ſecondly, 'tis not a meer melting of the eies, or yerning of the bowels I deſign to recommend: Alas, their tears will not be drink to a thirſty ſoul, nor will ſhivering at his nakedneſs cloth him. This is ſuch an inſignificant mercy as St. *James* deſcribes, ſaying to a brother or ſiſter, *be ye warmed, be ye filled, but not giving them things needful to the body*, ch. 2. 16. Indeed, ſhe that weeps over thoſe diſtreſſes ſhe will not relieve, might have bin fit to be enter'd in the liſt of the mourning women among the Jews and Heathens, who were hired to make up the Tragic Pomp of Funerals with their mercenary ſorrow, but had no real concern in that loſs they ſeem'd to bewail. 'Tis therefore a more active ſort of Compaſſion to which I would invite them; and yet for method ſake, I ſhall conſider it under two diſtinct Heads, Giving, and Forgiving.

1. By Giving, or liberality.

5. By Giving, in this place, I mean not a general liberality, (tho that prudently bounded, is an Excellence well becoming Perſons of Fortune) but only ſuch a Giving as terminates upon the needy, and is applied to ſuccor their indigencies. To give to thoſe from whom they may expect returns, may be a deſign, but at the beſt can be but generoſity and frankneſs of humor. 'Tis only then mercy (as Chriſt Himſelf has defin'd it) when it is to thoſe from whom they can *hope for nothing again.*

T'is was a principal part of the character of Solomons *vertuous Woman to ſtretch forth her hand to the poor.*

6. And in this Vertue women have in former Ages eminently excell'd, yea ſo eſſential was it, that we find *Solomon* thought not their character compleat without it, but numbers it among the properties of his Vertuous Woman, *Prov.* 31. 20. *She ſtretcheth forth her hand to the poor, and reacheth her hand to the needy.* And it is a little obſervable, that after he has deſcrib'd her Induſtry and Diligence for the acquiring of Wealth, this is ſet in the front of her diſburſments, as the principal uſe ſhe made of it; and precedes her providing Scarlet for her Houſhold, or fine Linnen and Purple for her ſelf, v. 21, 22. The application is very obvious, and admoniſhes all that own the ſame Title of Vertuous Women, to prefer the neceſſities of others before their own ſuperfluities and delicacies. Nay, if they look further, and conſider who it is that is perſonated in the poor, that begs in every needy diſtreſt ſuppliant, and that will finally own every act of mercy as don to himſelf; methinks they ſhould ſomtimes think fit to ſacrifice even their moſt moderate enjoiments to their charity, be aſhamed to ſerve themſelves before their Savior, or let him ſtand naked and hungry, whilſt they are ſolacing with that which would relieve him.

kind

7. But

7. But how then shall they answer it, who suffer him to be supplanted, not by their needs, but excesses; who have so devoted their hearts and purses to vanity and luxury, that they have neither will nor power to succor the wants of others? How unequal and disproportionate is it, that those who study to fling away mony upon themselves, cannot be temted by any importunity and distress, to drop an alms to the poor? What a prepostterous sight is it to see a Lady, whose gay Attire gives her the glittering of the Sun, yet have nothing of its other properties, never to cheer any drooping, languishing creature by her influence? 'Tis the counsel of the son of *Sirac*, *not to give the poor any occasion to curse thee*, *Eccluſ.* 4. 5. But sure such persons do it, if the poor happen not to have more Charity then they exemplify to them. For when they shall find such hard hearts under such soft raiment, see them bestow so much upon the decking their own bodies, and do nothing towards the necessary support of theirs; 'tis a shrewd trial of their Meekness. Poverty is apt of it self to imbitter the spirit, and needs not such an additional temtation.

This relief of others is supplanted by vanity and luxury.

8. Nay farther, when a poor starving wretch shall look upon one of these gay creatures, and see that any one of the baubles, the looseſt appendage of her dress, a fan, a busk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that would warm his emty bowels; will he not have sharp incitations not only to execrate her pride, and his own poverty, but consequently to repine at the unequal distribution of Providence, and add sin to his misery? The denial therefore of an alms may be a double cruelty, to the soul as well as to the body. 'Tis said of *Xenocrates*, that a chased Bird flying to his bosom, he rescued it with much satisfaction, saying, He had not betraid a suppliant; but this is in that case reverst, and in an higher instance; for what can be more the betraying of a suppliant, then instead of supplying his wants, to rob him of his innocence, and be his snare in lieu of his refuge? This is a consideration I wish more deeply impreſt upon the women of this Age; and truly 'tis their concern it should be so; for since at the last day the inquest shall be so particular upon this very thing, 'tis but necessary they should examin how they are fitted to pass that test.

Which lavish expence, is the most sharp incitation of the poor to impatience.

9. Let them therefore keep a preparatory audit within their own breſt, reflect upon the expences of their vanity, what the delicacy of their food, what the richness and variety of their clothes, nay what the meer hypocrisies of their dress, in false hair, and complexion has cost them; to which they may also add the charge of their recreations and divertisements, those costly arts of chasing away that time, which they will one day wish to recall: let them I say compute all this, and then confront to it the account of their Charity, and I much fear the latter will with many of them be comparatively as undiscernible, as *Socrates* found *Alcibiades's* Lands in the Map of the whole World, be so perfectly overwhelm'd, that it will appear little in their own sight and nothing in Gods.

Women of quality should audit the expences o vanity and charity.

10. For if the poor Widows mite acquir'd a value meerly from her poverty, that she had no more; by the rule of contraries we may conclude, how despicable the scanty oblations of the rich are in Gods account. If even their liberality who gave much, was outvied by a farthing, *Mark* 12. 41. to what point of diminution must their niggardly offerings, who give little, be reduced, especially when they shall be compared with the numerous and costly sacrifices they make to pride and luxury. Nay I wish some were not guilty of more then the disproportion, even the total omission of Charity, that in a multitude of Taylors bills cannot produce the account of one Garment for the poor, that amidst the delicacies of

They who give much may have their liberality outvied by a mite.

own diet (nay perhaps of their dogs too) never order'd ſo much as the crumbs of their Table to any hungry *Lazarus*. But let all ſuch remember, that there will come a time, when one of *Tabitha's* coats, *Acts* 9. 39. will be of more value then all their richeſt Wardrobes, tho they could number Gowns with *Lucullus's* Cloaks, which the *Roman* Story reports to be five thouſand; and that when their luxurious fare ſhall only feaſt the worms, and render them paſſive in that Epicuriſm they acted before, they will wiſh they had made the bellies of the poor their refectory, and by feeding them nouriſh'd themſelves to immortality.

Poſſeſſors of good things are only ſtewards and factors.

11. Let this I ſay be ſeriouſly remember'd now, leaſt hereafter they fall under the ſame exprobrating remembrance with the rich man in the Goſpel, *Luke* 16. 25. *Remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and* Lazarus *that which was evil; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* A Text which St. *Gregory* profeſſes was ever ſounding in his ears, and made him look with ſuſpicion and dread upon that grandeur to which he was advanced, as fearing it might be deſign'd as his final reward. With what terror then may thoſe look upon their preſent good things, who by ingroſſing them wholly to themſelves, own them as their entire portion, and implicitly diſclaim their ſhare of the future? For to that none muſt pretend, who receive their tranſitory goods under any other notion, then that of a Steward or Factor: as we may ſee in the parable of the Talents, where thoſe that had the reward of the five and ten Cities were not ſuch as had conſumed their Talents upon their own riot and exceſſes, but ſuch as had induſtriouſly emploied them according to the deſign of their Lord. And if it there fared ſo ill with the meer unprofitable ſervant, who had hoarded up his Talent, what ſhall become of thoſe, who ſquander away theirs, and can give no account either of Uſe or Principle?

The examples of primitive charity, ſ'ould be propos'd by women of quality to themſelves.

12. Were theſe conſiderations duly laid to heart, we might hope to ſee ſome of the Primitive Charity revive, when women of the Higheſt rank converted their Ornaments and coſtly Deckings into clothing for the poor, and thought no retinue ſo deſirable, ſo honorable as a train of Almsfolks. But I ſpeak improperly, when I make the poor their attendants, for indeed they rather attended the poor, did not only order the ſupply of their wants, but were themſelves their miniſters, waited about their ſick beds, dreſt their moſt loathſom ulcers, and deſcended to all the moſt ſervile offices about them.

Even the acting perſonally in it.

13. But theſe were ſuch heights, ſuch tranſcendencies of mercy, as requir'd a deeper foundation of Humility then will now be often met with: yet let me take the occaſion to ſay, that it may be a good managery of a charity to act (as far as they can) perſonally in it. For beſides that it prevents ſome abuſes and frauds, which deputed Agents may ſomtimes be temted too, they pay God a double tribute in it, of their perſons as well as their fortunes. Next they bring themſelves into acquaintance with the poor, and by that means correct thoſe contemts and nice diſdains, which their own proſperity is too apt to create. Further yet, they excite their own compaſſion, which being a motion of the ſenſitive part of the mind, cannot be ſtirr'd ſo effectually by any thing, as by the preſence of the object; the moſt pathetic tragical deſcription of a diſtreſs, being not able to affect us half ſo much as one ocular demonſtration. Laſtly 'tis an apt means to increaſe their thankfulneſs to Almighty God, whoſe bounty to themſelves muſt needs make a deeper impreſſion, when 'tis compared with the neceſſitous condition of others. For things are beſt illuſtrated by

by their contraries, and 'tis too observable in our depraved nature, that we value not things by their real positive worth, but comparatively as they excel others, nor ever make a right estimate of what we enjoy, till our own or others wants instruct us.

14. Upon all these considerations it may be a very becoming useful circumstance in any charitable ministery to be themselves the actors; and to that end 'twill be a very commendable industry, to qualifie themselves to be helpful to the poor in as many instances as they can; not only opening their purses, but dispensatories too, providing medicines for such as either by disease, or casualty want that sort of relief. A charity which I doubt not is practised by many, and I wish it were by more, that our nicer Dames who study only Cosmetics for themselves, would change the Scene, and instead of repairing or disguising their own complexions, study the restauration of their decrepit patient limbs. And sure, tho it be a less fashionable, 'tis much a better sight, to see a Lady binding up a sore, then painting her face; and she will cast a much sweeter savor in God's nostrils, with the smell of unguents and balsoms, then with the most exquisit odors and perfumes. For since God professes, *Isa.* 1. 13. that that very *incense* which was design'd as a part of his worship, *was an abomination to him*, because not accompanied with the acts of Mercy, we cannot think he will better like of those, which have no higher aim then delicacy and sensuality.

And therefore it would be a commendable industry to acquire those skils which may enable to reliefs.

15. But besides this part of mercy in Giving, there is another, that of Forgiving, which may happen to be of a larger extent then the former: for whereas that was confin'd to the poor, this has no such limits, but as it is possible to be injured by persons of all ranks, so this pardoning mercy is to reach equally with that possibility. This is that part of Charity which we peculiarly call Clemency, a Vertue which not only Christianity but Morality recommends. The Ancient *Romans* had it in such veneration, that they number'd it not only among Vertues but Deities, and built it a Temple. And they were somwhat towards the right in it, for it was, tho not God, yet so eminent an attribute of his, that nothing can more assimilate man unto him.

Compassion as it is exercis'd in giving, is also in forgiving.

16. There are many Heroic acts of this kind to be met with among the vertuous Heathens. *Lycurgus* not only forgave *Alexander* who had struck out his eie, but entertain'd him in his house, and by his gentle admonitions reclaim'd him from his former vicious life. *Aristides* being after signal services, and without crime, unjustly banish'd by his Citizens, was so far from acting, or imprecating against them, that at his departure from *Athens* he solemnly praied the Gods, that they might never by any trouble or distress be forc'd to recall him. So *Phocion* being unjustly condemned, left it as a solemn charge to his son *Phocas*, that he should never revenge his death. A multitude of the like examples might be produced, but we need not borrow light from their faint Tapers, when we have the Sun-beams, I mean the Sun of Righteousness, our blessed Savior, who, as he has recommended this grace by his precept, so he has signally exemplified it to us in his Practice; the whole design of his descent to earth being only to rescue his enemies from destruction. And as every part of his life, so the last Scene of it was particularly adapted to this end, and his expiring Breath expended in mediating for his crucifiers; *Father forgive them*, *Luke* 23. 34. And this copy of his was transcribed by his first followers, the Primitive Christians in their severest Martyrdoms praying for their persecutors.

Of this vertue there are heathen as well as Christian examples.

17. Thus

As there are deteſtable inſtances of the contrary vice.

17. Thus are we in the Apoſtles phraſe *compaſſed about with a cloud of witneſſes*, *Heb.* 12. 1. of eminent examples, which ought to have a forcible influence upon all, but methinks ſhould not fail to have it on that Sex, whoſe native tenderneſs prediſpoſes them to the Vertue, and who need but ſwim with the ſtream of their own inclinations. How can we think that their melting eies ſhould ever ſparkle fire, or delight in ſpectacles of cruelty, that their flexible tender hearts ſhould turn into Steel or Adamant, be uncapable of all impreſſions of pity? Yet God knows ſuch changes have too often bin ſeen: women have not only put off that ſoftneſs peculiar to them, but the common inſtincts of Humanity, and have exceeded not only ſavage men, but beaſts in cruelty. There have bin too frequent inſtances of the implacable malice, and inſatiable cruelties of women. I need not call in the aid of Poetic fiction, and tell them of *Clytemneſtra*, *Medea*, or the *Belides*, with hundreds of others, celebrated as inſtances of Heroic wickedneſs. There are examples enough in more authentic Stories, The *Roman Tullia*, the *Perſian Paryſatis*; and that we may not paſs by the ſacred Annals, *Jezebel*, and *Athaliah*. I forbear to multiply examples of this kind, of which all ages have produced ſome ſo eminent, as have render'd it a common obſervation, that no cruelty exceeds that of an exaſperated woman: and it is not much to be wonder'd at, ſince nothing can be ſo ill in its priſtine ſtate as that which degenerates from a better. No enmity we know ſo bitter as that of alienated friends; no ſuch perſecution as that of Apoſtats, and proportionably no ſuch ferity as that of a perverted mildneſs. So that the Poets were not much out, who as they repreſented the Graces under the figures of women, ſo they did the Furies too. And ſince 'tis in their election which part they will act, they ought to be very jealous over themſelves. The declinations to any vice are gradual, ſomtimes at firſt ſcarce diſcernable; and probably the greateſt monſters of cruelty, would at the beginning have deteſted thoſe inhumanities which afterwards they acted with greedineſs.

Suſpicion begets a quarrel, that makes hatred, that malice, that revenge.

18. It concerns them therefore to ward thoſe beginnings whoſe end may be ſo fatal. She that is quick in apprehending an affront, perhaps will not be ſo quick in diſmiſſing that apprehenſion; and if it be permitted to ſtay, 'twill quickly improve, twenty little circumſtances ſhall be ſubborn'd to foment it with new ſuſpicions, till at laſt it grow to a quarrel, from thence to hatred, from that to malice, and from that to revenge: and when that black paſſion has overſpread the mind, like an Egyptian darkneſs it admits no gleam of Reaſon or Religion, but hurries them blindfold to their own ruin often as well as others.

The ſpleen of a woman a moſt frequent cauſe of murders.

19. Let none think this only a fancy or ſcheme of Diſcourſe: there have bin too many tragical experiments of its truth. How many men have bin mortally engaged upon no weightier original then the ſpleen of a woman? the frantic notion of honor among our Duelliſts fitly correſponding with the as frantic impulſes of feminine revenge, and any imaginary injury (or perhaps but juſt imputation) to the Lady, obliging her Gallant to ruſh upon the moſt real ſin and danger. A madneſs ſomthing beyond that which the Romances deſcribe of Knight Errantry: for that generally is for the relief of diſtreſſed Damſels, but this is only to humor the too proſperous ones, the inſolent and the proud. Thoſe therefore that have obſerved the common occaſions of Duels, have not unfitly divided them between Wine and Women; it being hard to ſay which is the moſt intoxicating and beſotting. The Son of *Sirac* couples them together, *Eccluſ.* 19. 2.

Wine

Wine and Women will make men of underſtanding fall away. The many modern examples of this miſchief, as they ſhould ſtrike an extreme terror into thoſe Women who have bin any way acceſſary to the death, or but danger of any man; ſo are they juſt matter of caution to all, ſo to regulate their Paſſions, that they never come within diſtance of Implacability; for if once they arrive there, themſelves can give no ſtop.

Many times the telling a charitable truth has given the provocation.

20. In order to this, 'twill be well to conſider at the firſt incitation, what the real ground is; perhaps ſomtimes they are angry (as the Galatians were at St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 4. 16.) *at thoſe that tell them the truth*; ſome ſcandalous, or at leaſt ſuſpicious behavior, may have engaged a friend to admoniſh them; (an office that has ſomtimes prov'd very fatal; thoſe commonly that have moſt guilt having leſs patience to hear of it.) And if this be the caſe, 'tis the greateſt injuſtice in the world to make that a quarrel which is really an obligation: and therefore inſtead of maligning their Monitor, they ought to thank and reverence him. Nay, tho the accuſation be not with that candid deſign, but be meant as a reproch; yet if it be true, it ſhould not excite anger at their accuſers, but remorſe, and reformation in themſelves.

A reproof tho unkindly meant, is a benefit.

21. It was the ſaying of a Wiſe man, that he profited more by his enemies then his friends; becauſe they would tell him more roundly of his faults. And this is excellently improv'd by *Plutarch*, in his Tract, *Of the benefits to be reap'd from Enemies:* ſo that even a malicious accuſation may be a kindneſs, and conſequently ought not to be repaid with an injury. But ſuppoſe, in the laſt place, that the aſperſion be not only unkind, but untrue, it will not even then be ſafe to let looſe to their indignation. Firſt, in reſpect of Prudence, an angry vindication ſerving the deſign of the enemy, and helping to ſpread the calumny; whereas a wiſe neglect and diſſembling do's often ſtifle and ſuppreſs it. Secondly, in reſpect of duty, for all that own themſelves Chriſtians, muſt confeſs they are under an obligation to forgive, and not to revenge. Now if they intend to pay a real obedience to this Precept, 'twill be the more eaſie, the ſooner they ſet to it. He that ſees his houſe on fire, will not dally with the flame, much leſs blow, or extend it, reſolving to quench it at laſt. And anger is as little to be truſted, which if once throughly kindled, will ſcarce expire but with the deſtruction of the ſubject it works on.

The injury of an unkindneſs, is far leſs then that of reſentment.

22. Let therefore the diſoblig'd not look back upon the injury, but forward to thoſe miſchiefs which too ſharp a reſentment may betray them to: let them conſider, that the boiling of their blood may finally cauſe the effuſion of anothers, and wrath may ſwell into murder. If they would do thus, and inſtead of thoſe magnifying optics wherein they view the wrong, make uſe of the other end of the perſpective, to diſcern the diſmal event at diſtance; it would ſure fright them from any nearer approch, would keep them within thoſe bounds which their duty preſcribes them, and thereby acquaint them with a much greater and more ingenious pleſure then their higheſt revenge can give them: I mean that of forgiving injuries, and obliging the injurious. This is a pleſure ſo pure and refined, ſo noble and heroic, that none but rational natures are capable of it; whereas that of Spight and Revenge (if it can be call'd a pleſure) is a meer beſtial one; every the moſt contemtible animal can be angry when 'tis moleſted, and endevor to return the miſchief.

Compaſſion is the appropriat temper of men, and almighty God; but ferity the worſt of beaſts.

23. It ſhould therefore, methinks, be an eaſy determination, whether to embrace that Clemency and Compaſſion which we ſee exemplified in the wiſeſt and beſt of men, nay in the Omniſcient Immortal God, or that ſavage fierceneſs of the ignobleſt creatures. This is certain, that no woman would be content to aſſume the outward form of any of thoſe: why then ſhould they ſubject their nobler part, the mind, to ſuch a transformation? For, as there are no monſters ſo deformed, as thoſe which are compounded of man and beaſt: ſo among them all, nothing can be more unnatural, more odious, then a woman-Tiger. I conclude all with the advice of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 17. 14. *The beginning of ſtrife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be medled with.* When once a breach is made upon the ſpirit by immoderate anger, all the conſequent miſchiefs will flow in, like a rapid ſtream when the banks are broken down; nor is there any way to prevent it, but by keeping the mounds entire, preſerving that Tenderneſs and Compaſſion which God and Nature do equally inforce and recommend.

SECT. IV.

Of Affability.

Affability a vertue peculiarly appropriat to women of quality.

1. IN the next place we may reckon Affability and Courteſie; which as it is amiable in all, ſo it is ſingularly ſo in women of Quality, and more univerſally neceſſary in them then in the other Sex. For men have often charges and emploiments which do juſtify, nay perhaps require ſomwhat of ſternneſs and auſterity; but women ordinarily have few or no occaſions of it, and thoſe who have well digeſted the former Lectures of Meekneſs and Compaſſion, will not be apt to put it on unneceſſarily. Now Affability may be conſidered either as a meer human Accompliſhment, or as a divine Vertue; in either notion 'tis commendable, but 'tis the latter that gives it the higheſt Excellence and Perfection.

Its extraction is generous.

2. To begin with the firſt notion of it, we may take an eſtimate of its worth by its Cauſe, and by its Effects. For its Cauſe, it derives it ſelf either from a native candor and generoſity of mind, or from a noble and ingenuous Education, or ſomthing jointly from both; and theſe are as good Originals as any thing meerly moral can flow from. And that theſe are indeed its ſources, common experience will atteſt: thoſe of the greateſt Minds, and beſt Extractions, being uſually moſt condeſcending and obliging; whereas thoſe of moſt abject Spirits and Birth, are the moſt inſulting and imperious. *Alexander* the Great, tho terrible in the field, yet was of a gentle, complaiſant converſation, familiarly treating thoſe about him: yet *Criſpinus*, *Narciſſus*, *Nymphidius*, and other enfranchiſed bondmen, we find inſolently trampling upon the Roman Senators and Conſuls. 'Tis therefore a great error for Perſons of Honor, to think they acquire a reverence by putting on a ſupercilious gravity, looking coily and diſdainfully upon all about them; 'tis ſo far from that, that it gives a ſuſpicion that 'tis but a pageantry of greatneſs, ſome muſhrom newly ſprung up, that ſtands ſo ſtiff, and ſwells ſo much. But inſtead of teaching others to keep their diſtance, this faſtidious diſdain invites them to a

cloſer inſpection, that if there be any flaw either in their life or birth, 'twill be ſure to be diſcovered, there being no ſuch prying inquiſitor as curioſity, when 'tis egg'd on by a ſenſe of contemt.

Affability the cheapeſt price of love.

3. On the other ſide, if we conſider the effects of Courteſie, they are quite contrary; it endears to all, and often keeps up a Reputation in ſpight of many blemiſhes: a kind look or word from a Superior is ſtrangely charming, and inſenſibly ſteals away mens hearts from them. This the Wiſe man refers to *Eccluſ.* 18. 16. when he prefers a Word before a Gift. And 'tis *Plutarch*'s obſervation of *Cleomenes* King of *Sparta*, that when the Grecians compared his Affability and eaſineſs of Acceſs with the ſullen ſtate and pride of other Princes, they were ſo enamor'd with it, that they judged him only worthy to be a King. And as there is no certainer, ſo alſo no cheaper way of gaining love: a friendly ſalutation is as eaſy as a frown or reproch; and that kindneſs may be preſerv'd by them, which if once forfeited, will not at a far greater price be recovered.

Conſidering human viciſſitudes, the moſt prudent.

4. Beſides, when human viciſſitudes are conſidered, it may be a point of Prudence too; the greateſt Perſons may ſomtimes want aſſiſtance from the meaneſt; nay ſomtimes the face of affairs is quite changed, and the wheel of Fortune turns them loweſt that were uppermoſt, and proportionably elevates the meaneſt. 'Tis wiſdom therefore ſo to treat all, as to leave no impreſſions of unkindneſs, ſince none is ſo deſpicable, but may poſſibly at one time or other have an opportunity to retaliate. 'Twas therefore a prudent as well as an equitable reſolution of the Emperor, who ſaid he would ſo entertain the addreſſes of his Subjects, as, if he were a Subject, he would wiſh the Prince ſhould entertain him: a rule very worthy to ſway all Perſons of Honor in their entercourſe with others. And ſince even among Perſons in Command there are degrees, and ſhe which is ſuperior to one, is inferior to another; they have a ready way to compare the civility they pay, with that they expect. Let therefore one who meets with a cold, neglectful Treatment from any above her, examin her own reſentments, and then reflect, that if ſhe give the like to thoſe below her, they will doubtleſs have the ſame ſenſe; and therefore let her reſolve never to offer what ſhe ſo much diſlikes to bear: and ſhe that do's thus, that makes ſuch inferences, will convert an Injury into a Benefit; civilize her ſelf by the rudeneſs of others, and make that ill nurture her own diſcipline.

Affability is ennobled by its alliance with Humility.

5. But hitherto we conſider Affability only in its ethnic dreſs, as it is a human ornament; 'twill appear yet more enamoring upon a ſecond view, when we look on it as bearing the impreſs of the Sanctuary, as a divine Vertue. And that it is capable of being ſo, we have the autority of St. *Paul*, who inſerts it in the number of thoſe Chriſtian Graces which he recommends to his Roman Proſelytes; *Condeſcend to them of low eſtate*, *Rom.* 12. 16. And that we may the better diſcern its value, 'tis obſervable that he links it with the moſt eminent Vertue of Humility; for it immediatly follows his Precept of *be not high minded.* Indeed 'tis not only joined with it as a Friend or Allie, but deriv'd from it as its ſtock and Principle: and certainly a more divine extraction it cannot have, Humility being the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Vertues, that which laies the foundation (without which the moſt towring Structure will but cruſh it ſelf with its own weight) and that which perfects and conſummates the building alſo, ſecures and crowns all other Graces; which when they are moſt verdant and flouriſhing, are like *Jonas*'s gourd, that may afford ſome ſha-

dow and refreſhment for a while, but are apt to breed that worm which will deſtroy them. When once they are ſmitten with Pride, they inſtantly fade and wither; ſo neceſſary is Humility both for the acquiring and conſerving all that is good in us.

Which is a better motive then civility or prudence.

6. We may therefore conclude, that Courteſie, and Obligingneſs of behavior which proceeds thence, is in reſpect of its ſpring and original, infinitly to be preferr'd before that which deſcends from no higher ſtock then natural or prudential motives. And ſince 'tis natural for every production to have ſome ſimilitude to that which produces it, we ſhall find it no leſs excellent in reſpect of its properties then its deſcent. I ſhall inſtance only in two, Sincerity, and Conſtancy.

Affability ought to be ſincere.

7. For the firſt as far as Affability partakes of Humility it muſt of Sincerity alſo, that being a vertue whoſe very elements are plainneſs and ſimplicity: for as it has no deſigns which want a cover, ſo it needs none of thoſe ſubtilities and ſimulations, thoſe pretences and artifices requiſite to thoſe that do. 'Tis the precept of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 3. *In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem others better then himſelf:* where we ſee 'tis the nature of a lowly mind to transfer that eſteem to others which he ſubſtracts from himſelf: now where ſuch an eſteem is planted in the heart, it verifies all the expreſſions and outward ſignifications of reſpect, and renders the greateſt condeſcentions (which to an inſolent humor may ſeem extravagant and affected) real and unfeigned.

Elſe it may be the practice of Abſalom *to ſteal hearts, to ill purpoſes.*

8. On the contrary that Courteſie which derives no higher then from meer human principles, is not much to be confided in. 'Tis the Pſalmiſts affirmation *that all men are liars:* and therefore there is more then a poſſibility of deceit in their faireſt ſhews. Somtimes we know ſmooth and plauſible addreſſes have bin deſign'd as the ſtale to vile and trecherous practices. The extraordinary blandiſhments and endearing behavior of *Abſalom* to the people, was only to *ſteal their hearts*, and advance his intended rebellion, 2 *Sam.* 15. 6. and *David* tells us of ſome, *whoſe words were ſofter then butter, having war in the heart, whoſe words were ſmoother then oil, and yet were very ſwords, Pſal.* 55. 21. and God knows this age has not ſo much improved in ſincerity, that we ſhould think the ſame Scenes are not daily acted over among us.

There is a barbarous ſhew of Affability, to expoſe and deride.

9. But beſides all the blacker projects of this kind, which nothing but the event can detect, there is a lower ſort of this trechery, which is viſible, nay ſo avowed, that it is one of the moſt common ſubjects of mirth and entertainment, I mean that of ſcoffing and deriſion, a thing too frequent among all, but I fear I may ſay very peculiarly among Ladies, thoſe at leaſt of the modiſh ſort, their very civilities and careſſes being often deſign'd to gain matter of ſcorn and laughter. Mutual viſits we know are an expreſſion of reſpect, and ſhould flow from a real kindneſs, but if thoſe now in uſe be ſifted, how few will be found of that make? They are at the beſt formal, a tribute rather paid to cuſtom then friendſhip, and many go to ſee thoſe, for whom they are perfectly indifferent whether they find them alive or dead, well or ſick. Nay very often they are worſe then thus, deſign'd only to make obſervations, to bolt out ſomthing ridiculous wherewith to ſport themſelves as ſoon as they are gon; and leaſt the inqueſt ſhould return with a *non inventus*, they will accept of the ſlighteſt diſcoveries, the leaſt miſplacing of a word, nay of a hair ſhall be theme enough for a Comedy.

10. But

10. But if a poor Country Gentlewoman fall within their circuit, what a ſtock of mirth do's ſhe afford them, how curiouſly do they anatomiſe every part of her dreſs, her meen, her dialect, nay perhaps to improve the Scene, will recommend yet greater abſurdities to her, under the notion of the Mode, that ſo ſhe may be the more ample ſubject of their ſcorn. Such viſits as theſe are but inſidious intruſions, the inſinuations of a ſpy rather then the good office of a neighbor; and when 'tis remembred how great a portion of ſome womens time is ſpent in this kind of diverſion, we muſt conclude there have a multitude of acts gon to make up the habit. I wiſh they would ſeriouſly reflect on it, and unravel that injurious mirth by a penitential ſadneſs, and either ſpend their time better then in viſiting, or elſe direct their viſits to better purpoſes. And this they would certainly do if they would exchange their meer popular civilities (that kind of paint and varniſh in manners) for that true Chriſtian condeſcenſion, which admits of no deceit, but is as tranſparent as *Druſus* wiſht his houſe ſhould be, that has no ſecret ſcrues and ſprings, to move the eies or tongue a contrary way from the heart, but is in reality all that it pretends to be. *A diſcipline uſually inflicted on Ladies of country breeding.*

11. A ſecond property of it is Conſtancy, for as it is true to others, ſo it is to its ſelf; 'tis founded on the ſolideſt of Vertues, and is not ſubject to thoſe light and giddy uncertainties, that the vulgar civilities are. For he that out of a diſeſteem of his proper worth, has placed himſelf in a ſtate of inferiority, will think it not an arbitrary matter, but a juſt debt to pay a reſpect to thoſe he thinks his betters; and an humble mind will in every body find ſomthing or other to prefer to himſelf. So that he acts upon a fixt principle, and is not in danger of thoſe contradictions in his manners, which ſhall render him one day ſweet and affable, and another ſowre and moroſe. But ſuch mutations are frequently incident to thoſe who are ſwaied by other motives, ſomtimes an intereſt changes, and then the moſt fauning Sycophant can tranſplant his flatteries, and court a new Patron, yea many times to the deſpight and vilifying of the old. *Affability is to be conſtant.*

12. Somtimes again, fortune may change; a man may fall from a proſperous to an adverſe ſtate, and then thoſe who were prodigal of their civilities whilſt he needed nothing elſe, will withdraw even thoſe from him, leſt they ſhould encourage him to demand ſomthing more. An experiment of this *Job* made in his friends (or rather flatterers) whom he fitly compares to winter brooks, running over when not needed, but quite dry when they are. *Not altering with the varieties of fortune,*

13. But the moſt frequent change is that of fancy and humor, which has a much more general ſway then reaſon and judgment. This is ſo obſervable in the vulgar rabble, that often in an inſtant they will ſhift paſſions, and hate this hour what they doted on the laſt. Of this all popular States have afforded many coſtly experiments, but we need not go farther then the ſacred Story, where we find the Acclamations and *Hoſannahs* of the multitude, quickly converted into *crucifie him, crucifie him.* This levity of mind has bin obſerved ſo incident to women, that 'tis become almoſt proverbial; for by how much their paſſions are more violent, they are commonly the leſs laſting, and as they are reckon'd among thoſe colder bodies that are particularly influenced by the Moon, ſo they ſeem to bear a great reſemblance to her in her viciſſitudes and changes; yet ſtill with a greater degree of uncertainty: for ſhe in all her revolutions obſerves ſome conſtant periods, and we can tell in her wain when ſhe will *Or of fancy and humor.*

be at full, ſo that ſhe has a kind of certainty even in her planetary errors; but what Ephemerides can be framed for ſome womens humors? Who can tell how long the preſent will laſt? and what will be the next that will ſucceed?

Or deficiency in the arts of flattery.

14. I need not bring inſtances of their inconſtancy from that common place of paſſionate widows, who have let a new love ſail even thro thoſe floods of tears wherewith they bewailed the old. For (beſides that, that is a caſe wherein poſſibly they may find matter enough for retortion) it is here a little wide from my purpoſe, which deſigns no farther inquiſition then into their ordinary converſation, wherein that love of variety which is ſo remarkable in their habit, their diet, their diverſions, extends its ſelf often to their company, their friendſhips alſo and converſe. Thoſe intimacies which they cheriſht lately, quickly grow deſpicable, and at laſt nauſeous, and conſequently their behavior falls from kind and civil, to cold and diſdainful. I doubt not this has often bin prov'd by many of thoſe humble companions, which officiouſly attend them, who cannot alwaies fix themſelves, no not by thoſe flatteries that firſt introduc'd them. Some new comer perhaps has better refined the Art, and do's the ſame thing more acutely and ingeniouſly, and then the old one is to be turn'd off as too groſs a Sycophant. Or if they have bin ſo happy as to light upon ſome of a more generous temper, who inſtead of a ſervile compliance with their humor, and high characters of their worth, entertain them with the true images of themſelves, and endevor to make what others only ſpeak them, this is that unpardonable crime which forfeits all degrees of favor, and do's not only avert, but incenſe. A faithful Monitor is as unacceptable as a true Looking-glaſs to a deformed perſon, which at the beſt will be ſet aſide, and eſcapes well if not broken; and while great perſons diſpenſe their favors or their frowns by ſuch perverſe meſures as theſe, they will be ſure to do it unjuſtly, as well as unconſtantly.

Humility is the beſt preſervative againſt flattery.

15. I am far from making this an univerſal charge, I know there are women of the higheſt quality, that guide themſelves by other rules, that are deaf to all the ſongs of *Sirens*, and have the prudence to value a ſeaſonable reproof before the moſt extravagant Panegyric: but this is owing to that Humility which I am now recommending, without which 'tis as impoſſible for greatneſs to be proof againſt flattery, as it is for a Pinnace with ſpreading ſails, and a violent guſt of wind, to ſail ſteddily without ballaſt. And the frequent want of this is it which makes it no leſs frequent to ſee thoſe unevenneſſes and inequalities in behavior; thoſe partialities in diſpenſing even the commoneſt civilities, which I have now repreſented.

That vulture vice, that picks out firſt the eies of the creature deſign'd for a prey.

16. And ſure 'tis none of the meaneſt attributes due to that excellent vertue of Humility that it can thus fix and poiſe the mind, cure thoſe vertigo's and giddy humors, incident to thoſe who are mounted aloft: and above all, that it is a ſure antidote againſt the moſt inſinuating poiſon of Flattery, an holy ſpell or amulet againſt the venom of a Paraſite, which the Philoſopher juſtly calls the worſt of tame beaſts, as a Detractor is of wild: He being indeed a kind of vulture, in the way of ſeizure no leſs then ravine, who firſt picks out the eies of that which he deſigns to prey upon, ſuffering not the perſon concern'd, to ſee any thing of that deſtruction which he is to feel. And certainly none of the ominous birds, no night-raven or ſcreech-owl can abode half ſo diſmally as theſe domeſtic birds of prey, which are not only preſages, but inſtruments of ruin whereſoever they haunt.

17. 'Tis

17. 'Tis therefore the univerſal concern of thoſe that are great and proſperous to chaſe them away, as *Abraham* did the Fowls from his Sacrifice, *Gen.* 15. 11. but yet more peculiarly ſo of thoſe to whom fortune has given a ſudden riſe and unexpected grandeur, they being of all others the moſt obnoxious to this ſort of Harpies. The ſurprizes of proſperity do no leſs diſturb the judgment then thoſe of Adverſity: and as one who is in an inſtant ſnatcht up to ſome high Tower, is ſo amazed to ſee himſelf there, that he has no juſt meſure of the altitude, but thinks every thing farther below him then it is: ſo they that aſcend to greatneſs by ſwift and rapid motions, have their heads ſo turned, that they are apt to overvalue it, and to look with contemt on thoſe who before perhaps they thought worth their envy. And on a mind thus prepared, flattery may make any impreſſions, it ſuborning even Providence as a witneſs on its ſide, and inferring from the Dignities obtain'd, the tranſcending merit of the obtainer: a piece of Sophiſtry which the ſlighteſt obſerver may eaſily confute, all Ages giving inſtances of thoſe whoſe Vices have preferr'd them, and by a ſtrange Chymiſtry have extracted Honor out of infamous acts. Yet to a mind poſſeſt with its own admiration, this ſhall paſs for a demonſtration: ſo trecherous a thing is Pride, that it combines with all who deſign to cheat us. And indeed 'tis not only an acceſſary, but the principal; none being in danger by others flatteries, who are not firſt ſeduced by their own.

They who come to unexpected greatneſs are moſt obnoxious to flattery.

18. It will therefore be a point of Wiſdom for all Perſons of Honor to encreaſe their caution with their fortune; and as they multiply their Retinues without, ſo eſpecially to enforce their Guard within, that they become not ſlaves to their own Greatneſs, fix not themſelves in ſuch a poſture of State, as to become immovable to all the offices of Humanity and Civility; nor think that their admiſſion to Greatneſs is upon the ſame terms on which the Jews were wont to receive their Proſelytes, that they muſt renounce all their former relations; but to remember that they differ no more from others then as a counter ſet in the place of thouſands or hundreds, do's from one ſet in the place of tens or units. A little tranſpoſition may quite alter the caſe; or however when they are all taken off the ſcore, they are then indiſcriminatly tumbled together, and one has no precedence of another, either in place or value. So undiſcernible will be the difference between the greateſt Queen, and the meaneſt Servant, when Death, that great Leveller, ſhall have mixt them; there will be no inquiſition in the Grave who came embalm'd, or perfum'd thither: And, as a Learned man ſays, the Ulcers of *Lazarus* will make as good duſt as the Paint of *Jezebel*.

They who are advanc'd, ought to encreaſe their caution with their fortune.

19. But I ſhall be thought to have out-run my Subject, or inſtead of that amiable Image of Affability and univerſal Obligingneſs, the great Ornament of Life, introduce the grim figure of Death, that ſullen Executioner, whom no Gifts, no Praiers can mollifie. Yet I cannot yield it wholly impertinent; for, as its final ſtroke cures all the infirmities of the body, ſo the foreſight and contemplation of it is as much a Catholicon for all the maladies of the mind; eſpecially that of Inſolence and Diſdain. For ſure they cannot much pride themſelves in any exaltation, that remember they muſt finally fall into the duſt: nor arrogantly deſpiſe others, who conſider that themſelves ſhall one day be inſulted over by worms and inſects. Such mental deſcents into the vault or charnel-houſe, are the beſt diſciplines for the demeanor in other places, according to the admonition of the Wiſe man, *Remember thy end, and thou ſhalt never do amiſs.*

And above all remember their end.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of Piety.

The ſupreme f minine vertue is Piety and Devotion.

1. LAſtly, To compleat and crown all other Excellencies, nothing is ſo proper, ſo neceſſary as Piety and Devotion. This is the ſalt which ſeaſons all Sacrifices; yea, the Altar which ſanctifies the Gift, no good (how ſplendid ſoever in the ſight of man) being acceptable to God, till it be thus conſecrated, and have this ſeal of the Sanctuary upon it. This is a Vertue truly Divine, as well in its original as its end; for as it comes from Heaven, (is an afflation of the bleſſed Spirit) ſo it tends thither alſo, and thither raiſes its Votaries. This is it which ſublimates and ſpiritualizes Humanity, defecates and refines it from all the dregs of mortality, and ſo wings our earthly lumpiſh nature, that we can ſoar aloft to the region of ſpirits, and by its raptures make ſome eſſay of that ſtate of ſeparation, even while we are linked to the body. This is it which combines us ſo with God, that we have the ſame intereſts, the ſame choices; nay it do's in a ſort communicate and enterchange properties with him; the all-Powerful God ſeems impotent and unable to reſiſt its influence, whilſt it inveſts us feeble wretches in a kind of Omnipotence, by engaging him for us who can do all things.

Piety in its utmoſt extent, includes all duty.

2. Now this Piety may be conſider'd either in a larger, or more limited ſenſe: in the former 'tis as wide as the whole ſcheme of Duty, not confin'd to any one act, but extended to all the commands of God. For as the animal Spirit diffuſes its ſelf into all the moſt diſtant members of the body; ſo this more vital Principle has as univerſal an influence on the mind, ſtamps that with ſuch an admiration and reverence of God, ſuch a love and complacency in him, that every act is (at leaſt habitually) deſign'd to obey and glorifie him.

More properly it means the acts of adoration and worſhip.

3. In the more limited ſenſe, Piety is taken for our more immediat entercourſe with God, in things purely divine, as Adorations, Praiers, Aſpirations, and all pantings and breathings of the ſoul after him; and in this notion 'tis more particularly call'd Devotion. And this is comprehended in the other, as a part in the whole; nay indeed, as an effect in its cauſe; for where Piety has not firſt form'd and modell'd the ſoul, there can be no true Devotion. External forms of it there may be, but that is but ceremony and pageantry, the moſt ſubmiſſive proſtrations are there but like that of *Dagon* before the Ark, the fall of a liveleſs trunk; the moſt elevated eies but a kind of convulſive motion, and the moſt rigid mortifications, but like the cuttings and launcings of *Baal*'s Prieſts. Of this the very Heathen had ſome notion, and therefore in their worſhips had many preparatory ceremonies of luſtration and purifying, as being conſcious of the incongruity, that unholy Perſons ſhould be admitted to Sacred things. And accordingly *Socrates* has excellently (I had almoſt ſaid Evangelically) defin'd, *the beſt way of worſhipping God*, to be *the doing what he commands.* Indeed without this, our Devotion is meer ſtratagem and deſign: we invoke God as we uſe to cajole men, only to ſerve a preſent turn; and of ſuch diſingenuous addreſſes, 'tis eaſy to read the event, or if we cannot, *Solomon* will inſtruct us, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The Praiers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

4. To

4. To treat of the ſeveral branches of Piety in the firſt notion, is not agreeable to the intended brevity of this Treatiſe; nor neceſſary, becauſe there are ſo many diſtinct Tracts extant on that Subject; yet I ſhall the more cloſely to adapt it to my female Readers, obſerve the propriety of it to women, not only as it is their greateſt Ornament and Advantage, but eſpecially as they have ſomwhat more of prediſpoſition towards it in their native temper. God's Laws, which are the rule of Piety, have this common with mens, that they are inforced upon us by the propoſals both of Puniſhments and Rewards, by that means engaging two of our moſt ſenſible paſſions, Fear and Love; and the female Sex being eminent for the pungency of both theſe, they are conſequently the better prepared for the impreſſions of Religion. *The advantages of the female Sex by the prevalence of the paſſions of fear and love.*

5. This is ſo much acknowledg'd, that our maſculine Atheiſts make an ill uſe of it, and are willing to think that Religion ow's its force only to the impotence of the ſubject on which it works, that 'tis only an impoſition upon the eaſy credulity of women, and are content to allow them the incloſure of it: wherein, tho they ſufficiently ſhew their contemt of Piety, yet they unawares give a greater honor to that Sex then they intend, whilſt they confeſs it more capable of an aſſimilation to the ſupreme Goodneſs, and of the renewal of God's Image (for to that all Piety is deſign'd) then their own. And therefore women have ſo little reaſon to be aſham'd, that they ought to glory in the conceſſion, and gratefully to celebrate the goodneſs of God to them, who, as he brings light out of darkneſs, ſo converts their natural infirmities into a means of ſpiritual ſtrength, makes the impotencies and defects of their nature ſubſervient to the operation of Grace; and by conſecrating their very Paſſions, makes even thoſe Gibeonites ſerviceable to the Tabernacle. But then 'tis to be remembred, that the greater is their obligation to comply with this deſign of Gods, to let their paſſions run in the channel he has cut for them; ſo to confine their Fear and Love to ſpiritual Objects, that they make no inordinate eruptions to any thing elſe, but in all their eſtimations of things dreadful or deſirable, to give ſtill the juſt deference to that which is eternal. *Fear is pretended to be the firſt mover in religion.*

6. And, as Women in General have this advantage towards Piety, and obligation to it; ſo particularly thoſe of Quality, who we may ſuppoſe to have generally a more early inſtitution and inſtruction in it then thoſe of a meaner rank: and beſides, have afterwards more opportunities of being built up in the knowledg of their duty, and (by the help of an ingenuous education) clearer apprehenſions to diſcern it; and when they do ſo, have greater obligations to perform it, both in reſpect of God, of others, and themſelves. *Women of quality have a particular obligation to Piety from the advantages of inſtitution.*

7. In reſpect of God they have the greateſt tie of gratitude, not only for the common mercies which they partake with the reſt of mankind, but for thoſe peculiar, by which they are differenc'd from others; of which, if they want a juſt value, let them ask themſelves how willing they would be to part with them, how ſhe that has fed delicatly, would like to be deſolate in the ſtreet, or *ſhe that has bin brought up in Scarlet, to embrace the Dunghill, Lam.* 4. 5. and according to the averſion they find to ſuch a change, let them eſtimate their preſent enjoiment, and the thankfulneſs it exacts. *As alſo for their liberal portion of worldly goods.*

8. Secondly, in regard of others, their Piety backt with their ſecular advantages, may be of a more extenſive benefit; they have many opportunities of doing good by their influence on others; or if no way elſe, *As alſo for their advantages of doing good to others.*

yet the ſplendor of their example, will by the eminency of their conditions ſhine (as a light on ſome high Tower) more perſpicuouſly, and guide many into the ſame path of Vertue. And certainly 'tis no ſmall obligation that lies on them in this reſpect; for God, who do's nothing without an end worthy of his Wiſdom, can never be thought to have ſelected ſome perſons as the objects of his bounty, meerly that they may ſwill and glut themſelves with ſenſual pleſures. No doubtleſs, he that is the great Maſter of the Univerſe, diſpoſes all things for common benefit; and therefore, if He have placed ſome in an higher Orb then others, it is that they may have an auſpicious influence on thoſe below them; and if they fail in this, they are no longer Stars but Comets, things of ominous and unlucky abode to all about them. I might enlarge on this Subject, but having done it already in the Gentlemans Calling, I ſuppoſe it unneceſſary, ſince that part is equally adapted to both Sexes.

Likewiſe for their greater temtations. 9. In the laſt place, they have all obligation to Piety, in reſpect of themſelves, and that in two conſiderations; the firſt, of their preſent danger; the ſecond, of their final account. For their danger, 'tis evident they do not more out-number their inferiors in any thing then in the opportunities, nay ſollicitations to ſin. Wealth and Honor have many ſnares, and which is worſe, do often diſpoſe the mind to ſuch an heedleſs ſecurity, that it takes no care to avoid them: and as in the body, the diſeaſes of repletion are far more numerous then thoſe of emtineſs, ſo the mind is oftner vitiated by Affluence and Proſperity, then by Indigence and Adverſity. It becomes therefore thoſe who are ſo ſurrounded with enemies to fortifie themſelves: and that they can no way do, but by a ſincere Piety, that *whole Armor of God* which the Apoſtle deſcribes, *Eph.* 6. 13. *by which alone they may repell all the darts of temtations*; nay not only ward the blow, but wreſt the weapon out of Satans hand, ſo that when he urges to them the opportunities, the impunity which their wealth and greatneſs gives them to be had, they may retort his argument, and by a wholſomer inference collect thence their great obligation to be good; and that not only upon the ſcore of Gratitude (tho that were enough to an ingenious ſoul) but in the ſecond place of Intereſt alſo, in reſpect of that account they muſt finally give. For tho God be not an unjuſt exactor to reap where he has not ſowed, yet he is not ſo negligently profuſe, as to do that which no prudent man will do, ſcatter his goods promiſcuouſly, without taking notice where they fall; but as he diſpences all things by a particular Providence, ſo he do's it to a particular end, and will exact as particular an account how that end has bin complied with.

And larger final account. 10. It is a ſmart exprobation of Gods to *Iſrael*, *Ezek.* 16, 17, 18, 19. that ſhe had ſacrilegiouſly emploied his *ſilver and gold, his oil, his flower and hony which he had given her in the ſervice of her Idols*, by which as we may ſee he takes notice how we diſpoſe of our temporal poſſeſſions, ſo it ſhews us how the enditement will proceed againſt all thoſe who ſo pervert their uſe. With what confuſion muſt they appear at the great Audit who can give no other account of their receits, but that they conſumed them upon their luſts, waged war againſt God with his own treſure, and bin as well thieves as rebels? What a Luciferian fall will they have from their honors, who have endevor'd to undermine Gods? thought themſelves too great to pay him homage, and by their profane and vicious example, induced a contemt of him. In ſhort, what a retaliation of inverſions will there then be? thoſe that have turn'd Grace into wantonneſs, converted his bounty into the fuel of their pride and luxury, ſhall then

then have their glory turn'd into ſhame, their riots and exceſſes into the want of a drop of water, and ſhall retain nothing of their greatneſs, but the guilt, the grating remembrance of having abuſed thoſe temporal bleſſings, which if well managed, might have received them into everlaſting habitations. How neceſſary then is it for all who have receiv'd ſo much upon account, to be often reflecting on it, examining what charges the great owner has impos'd upon ſo ample an income? what God requires of them for whom he hath done ſo much? And this is particularly the buſineſs of Piety, which in all the foremention'd reſpects, is as the uſefulleſt, ſo the nobleſt accompliſhment of greatneſs.

'Tis the maſtery of this age that Religion is thought an abject contemtible thing.

11. And ſuch it hath bin accounted till this profane Age of ours, which has remov'd all the boundaries of the former, reverſt even the inſtincts of nature, and will not leave us ſo much of Religion as had the very worſt of Heathens. For how erroneous ſoever they were in the choice of their Deities, they alwaies honor'd and reverenc'd thoſe they choſe, committed moſt of their enormities in obedience, not in affront to them: did not aſſign them votaries as *Jeroboam* did his Prieſts of the meaneſt of the people, but thought themſelves dignified by their ſervice, and eſteem'd it an infamy not to be pious. But alas now adaies we make other eſtimates, Religion is ſo abject, ſo contemtible a thing, as is thought fit to influence none that are great either in parts or quality: and therefore tho too many are willing to appropriate it to women, upon the firſt account, *as the Goſpel is the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. yet they make exceptions upon the later, and are not willing to afford it any of the nobler Proſelytes even of that Sex.

The patrons of Atheiſm wanting the ſupport of reaſon, are ſtudious to abet their party by the autority of great perſons.

12. I doubt not there are many Lectures read to ſuch, to fortifie them againſt all impreſſions of Piety, to raze out the common notion of a God, and in order that to depoſe his Vicegerent within them, diſcard their conſcience, that unmannerly inmate, which is ſtill ſpeaking what they have no mind to hear, and will be apt ſometimes to queſtion their grand principle, and tell them they have ſouls. And truly 'tis no wonder if the abetters of Atheiſm take this courſe; for ſince they have no ſoild foundation of truth or reaſon, 'tis but neceſſary they ſupport their Party by Autority; the countenance and applauſe of great Perſons, and God knows they have too much ſucceeded in the deſign. But, in the mean time, what ſecurity do they give for the truth of their pretenſions? We know 'tis ſtill required of thoſe that will practice upon other peoples concerns, that they put in caution to ſecure the owner from damage. But alas, what gage can they give for a ſoul? Who can contrive a form of Indemnity where that is the thing hazarded?

Alſo by ſenſual topics, and bold aſſertings.

13. 'Tis eaſy indeed for one of theſe Apoſtles of *Satan*, to tell a Lady that ſhe has nothing to do but to indulge to her pleſure; that 'tis the extremeſt folly to be frighted from a preſent enjoiment, by a fear of I know not what future ſmart; that God, and Sin, and Hell, are but names, certain Mormos and Bug-bears conjur'd up by Divines, to work upon her fear, and abuſe her credulity. This, and much more of this kind may be ſaid, and I doubt often is; but all this while the queſtion is begg'd, and a ſtrong affirmation muſt paſs for proof: for I defie all the Doctors of Atheiſm to make any demonſtration of their Tenet; and yet, tho they pretend to no demonſtration themſelves, Religion muſt be condemned meerly for the want of it: that is for not making ſpiritual things liable to ſenſe, for diſtinguiſhing between Belief and Science; which is indeed for doing the moſt reaſonable thing in the world, *viz.* the remitting every

object to the trial of its proper faculty: and they who ſuſpect it upon that account, may by the ſame kind of Logic wrangle us out of all our ſenſes, may perſwade us we hear nothing becauſe the eie diſcerns not ſounds, that we taſt not, becauſe the ear underſtands not guſts and ſapors, and ſo on to the reſt.

They who decry the weakneſs of believing, at the inſtant expect an implicit aſſent to their dictates.

14. And yet this is the bottom of thoſe Arguments which the great pretenders to Reaſon make againſt Religion; and in the mean time have ſo little ingenuity as to exclaim on the light credulity of fools and women, that embrace the dictates of faith, whilſt at the ſame inſtant they exact a more implicit aſſent to their negative Articles, their no Religion. A ſtrange magiſterial confidence ſo to impoſe on this Age, what is ſo univerſally contradictory to all former, and to the common verdict of mankind. For 'tis obſervable thro all the ſucceſſions of men, that there were never any ſociety, any collective body of Atheiſts. A ſingle one perhaps might here and there be found (as we ſee ſomtimes monſters or miſhapen births) but for the generality they had alwaies ſuch inſtincts of a Deity, that they never thought they ran far enough from Atheiſm; but rather choſe to multiply their Gods, to have too many then none at all: nay were apt to deſcend to the adoration of things below themſelves, rather then to renounce the power above them. By which we may ſee that the notion of a God is the moſt indelible character of natural Reaſon; and therefore whatever pretence our Atheiſts make to ratiocination and deep diſcourſe, it is none of that primitive fundamental reaſon coetaneous with our humanity; but is indeed a reaſon fit only for thoſe who own themſelves like the beaſts that periſh.

The tenets of Atheiſts if probable in any degree; cannot be ſafe.

15. But admit we could be more bountiful to them, and allow their opinion an equal probability with our Faith, yet even this could never juſtifie any body in point of Prudence, that ſhould adhere to them. Common diſcretion teaches us that where two propoſitions have an equal appearance of truth, there is no rational inducement to prefer one before the other, till we have examin'd the conſequences, and find ſomthing in the one which may over-poiſe and outweigh the contrary. Now in all things that concern practice, there are no motives ſo conſiderable, either to invite or avert, as Advantage or Danger.

A parallel of the intereſts of the Atheiſt,

16. Let us apply this to the preſent caſe, and examin the pretenſions of the Atheiſt and the Chriſtian in both reſpects. But firſt we are to remember, that both Advantage and Danger are to be viewed under a double notion, either as preſent or as future. The former is the Atheiſts moſt proper ſubject, and indeed all he can pertinently ſpeak to, who profeſſes himſelf only a man of this world. Here he will tell us that the disbelief of God and another life, is the great enfranchiſer of mankind, ſets us at liberty from that thraldom, thoſe Bonds wherewith our ſuperſtitious fears had fetter'd us, that it ſuperſedes all thoſe nice and perplexing inquiries of lawful and unlawful, and reduces all our inquiſitions only to this one, how we ſhall moſt pleaſe our ſelves. The glutton need not put a knife to his throat, but is only to put an edg upon his palate. The drunkard need not refrain his cups, but only take care that they be filled with the moſt delicious liquor. The wanton need not pull out his eie, but only contrive to poſſeſs what that temts him to deſire; and in a word none of our appetites need be reſtrain'd, but ſatisfied. And this uncontrol'd licentiouſneſs, this brutiſh liberty, is that *ſummum bonum*, that ſupreme happineſs which they propoſe to themſelves, and to which they invite others.

17. On

17. On the other ſide the Chriſtian is not without his claim to a preſent advantage, tho of a far differing nature: he is not ſo prepoſterous as to think it a preferment to ſink below his kind; to aſpire to an aſſimilation with meer animals, which is the utmoſt the former amounts to, but he propoſes to himſelf the ſatisfaction of a man; thoſe delights which may entertain his Reaſon not his Senſe, which conſiſt in the rectitude of a well inform'd Mind. His Religion is the perfecteſt Scheme of Morality, and makes him a Philoſopher without the help of the Schools, it teaches him the art of ſubduing his appetites, calming his paſſions, and in a word makes him Lord of himſelf; and by that gives him all the pleſures which reſult from ſuch a Soveraignty. Nor is he totally void even of the pleſures of ſenſe, which in many inſtances are greater to him then to thoſe that moſt court them. Temperance cooks his courſeſt diet to a greater guſt, then all their ſtudied mixtures; Chaſtity makes one lawful embrace more grateful to him, then all the nauſeating variety of their unbounded luſts; and Contentment ſwells his mite into a talent, makes him richer then the *Indies* would do if he deſired beyond them. Nor is it a contemtible benefit that his Moderation gives him an immunity from thoſe ſenſitive pains which oft bring up the rear of inordinate ſenſual pleſures, So that his condition even ſet in the worſt light, in that very particular wherein the Atheiſt moſt triumphs over him, is not ſo deplorable as 'tis repreſented. *And the pious.*

18. But if it were, he has pleſures that would infinitly overwhelm that ſmart, and that not only in his reaſon (as hath bin ſaid before) but in his more ſublime diviner part, ſuch irradiations from above, ſuch antepaſts of his future bliſs, ſuch acquieſcence in a calm and ſerene conſcience, as is very cheaply bought with all he can ſuffer here. I know the profane laugh at theſe things as Chimera's and the illuſions of a prepoſſeſs'd fancy (and truly if they were ſo, they might yet come in balance with many of their pleſures which are as much owing to opinion and imagination:) but if we conſider what ſupports they have given under the heavieſt preſſures, how they enabled the primitive Martyrs, not only to ſuffer, but even to court all that is formidable to human nature, we cannot think that a meer phantaſtic imaginary joy could deceive the ſenſe of ſuch real, ſuch acute torments. And tho in this great declination of Zeal, there be perhaps few that can pretend to thoſe higher degrees of ſpiritual raptures, yet certainly were the votes of all devout perſons collected, they would all concur in this teſtimony, that even in the common offices of Piety, the ordinary diſcharge of a good Conſcience, there is an infinitly greater complacence, a higher guſt and reliſh then in all the pleſures of Senſe. But of this the moſt irrefragable witneſſes are thoſe who from great voluptuaries have turn'd devotes; and I dare appeal to their experience, whether of the two ſtates is the moſt pleſant. I wiſh thoſe who will not believe this on others words, would themſelves make the trial, and till they do ſo they are notoriouſly unjuſt to pronounce that a fiction, of whoſe reality they refuſe to make proof. *The advantage of the pious in reſpect of pleaſure.*

19. By what hath bin ſaid, ſome eſtimate may be made which bids faireſt (the Atheiſt or Chriſtian) as to preſent temporal felicity: but alas what an allay, what a damp is it to felicity to ſay 'tis temporal; yet we may give it a term below that, and ſay 'tis momentary. For ſince our life is ſo, nothing that depends on that can be otherwiſe, and yet in this ſhallow bottom the irreligious embark their all. For, as to all future advantage, 'tis their Principle to diſclaim it, they diſcern *no reward for* *On the account of Eternity.*

blameleſs ſouls, Wiſd. 2. 22. So that in this particular the Chriſtian do's not compare with, but triumph over them. *He knows that if his earthly houſe of this Tabernacle be diſſolv'd, he hath a building of God; an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens,* 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. That when he parts with his life, he do's not reſign his happineſs, but ſhall receive it infinitly improv'd both in degree and duration. And now certainly 'tis viſible enough which opinion propoſes the fairer hopes, and conſequently which (ſuppoſing but an equal probability of truth) is the moſt inviting.

The parallel between the future proſpects of the Atheiſt and pious.

20. But ſome ſpirits there are ſo ignoble, that the moſt glorious Prize cannot animate them; that like a ſwine, the muſcles of whoſe eies, they ſay, permit him not to look upwards, is not concerned in all the felicities above, but would at a venture reſign his ſhare in thoſe, ſo he may ſecurely enjoy his husk and draff. But yet even thoſe who are uncapable of the more generous reſentments, may be apt enough to the more ſervile; and danger may fright, tho glory cannot allure them. It concerns ſuch therefore to compare the miſchiefs which each Opinion threatens to their oppoſits, and from thence make an eſtimate which is ſafeſt to be choſen. And here let the Atheiſt himſelf caſt up the account of the dangers conſequent to Chriſtianity, and it can all amount but to this, the deprivation (or rather moderation) of ſom preſent ſenſual Pleſures, or the incurring of ſom preſent ſenſitive Pains; the former in the daily exerciſe of Temperance, and Mortification; the latter, (more rarely and oftner in purpoſe then act) the ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake. And both theſe the Chriſtian ballances, nay out-weighs by two more important preſent hazards on the other ſide. To the former, he oppoſes the danger of being enſlav'd to the brutiſh part of a mans ſelf, a thing ſo deplorable even in the judgment of humanity, that all Writers of Ethics have uniformly declar'd no ſervility to be ſo ſordid and intolerable, as that of the vicious man to his Paſſions and Luſts. To the later, he confronts the miſchief of being a ſlave to every man elſe; for ſuch he certainly is, whom the fear of ſuffering can baffle out of any thing he thinks juſt and honeſt. For if all the men in the World could ſucceſſively have the power to afflict him, they would alſo have to command and rule him; and what can be more abject, more below the dignity of human nature, then to have a ſpirit alwaies prepar'd for ſuch a ſervitude? Beſides, even the utmoſt ſufferings which Chriſtianity can at any time require, is outvied daily by the effects of Luxury and Rage; and for one that has opportunity to be a Martyr for his God, thouſands become ſo to their Vices.

And the manifeſt advantage of the pious.

21. If from the preſent we look forward to future dangers, the Atheiſt muſt here be perfectly ſilent; he cannot ſay that the Chriſtian after this life ſhall be in any worſe eſtate then himſelf, ſince he concludes they ſhall both be the ſame nothing: but the Chriſtian threatens him with a more diſmal ſtate. He allows him indeed a being, yea an eternal one; but it is only ſuch as qualifies him for a miſery as eternal; the worm that never dies, the fire unquenchable, where all the exceſſes of his ſhort Pleſures ſhall be reveng'd with more exceſſive, endleſs Torments: his ſenſes which were here the only Organs of his felicity, ſhall then be (tho not the only) the very ſenſible mediums of his wretchedneſs; and that Conſcience which he here ſuſpended from its office, ſhall then take out its arrears, and return all its ſtifled admonitions in perpetual horrors, and deſperate upbraidings. I need not now ſure ask on which ſide the greater danger lies.

22. To

22. To conclude, the reſult of all is, that the tranſitory Pleſures of the Atheiſt are over-poiſed even by the preſent Satisfactions of the Pious. And the eternity of unbounded, unconceivable joies he expects hereafter, comes in *ex abundanti*, having nothing on the other ſide that offers at a competition with it. And at the very ſame rate of Proportion we have ſeen the dangers alſo are ſo, that we can eaſily compute the utmoſt miſchief our Chriſtianity can do us, if it ſhould be falſe; but the damage of the other is ineſtimable, both for the penalty of Loſs and Senſe. I may now appeal to common Prudence to judg of the vaſt inequality, and to pronounce, that ſure there had need be ſome great evidence of truth on the Atheiſts ſide, to preponderate all theſe diſadvantages. Indeed, nothing much below a demonſtration can juſtify the choice of ſo dangerous Principles; I am ſure an equal probability can never do it, where the danger is ſo unequal; and were the verieſt Atheiſt conſulted in a ſecular caſe of the like circumſtances, he would certainly pronounce him a mad man that ſhould make ſuch an election. How deſperate a phrenſy then is it to do it, without ſo much as that equal probability: nay indeed, without any probability at all? And yet this madneſs ſets up for the monopoly not of Wit only, but Reaſon too; and by confidence and clamor, ſeeks to run down thoſe Arguments it can never confute.

If common prudence be appeal'd to, in like ſecular circumſtances the Atheiſt would determin againſt himſelf.

23. I may be thought here to have made too long a digreſſion from my proper Subject, but I cannot confeſs it ſo; for ſince my preſent buſineſs is to recommend Piety, I can no way do that ſo effectually as by ſhewing its conſonancy to right reaſon, eſpecially conſidering the buſie induſtry now uſed to repreſent it under another form, and to alienate from it thoſe perſons whoſe Greatneſs may give it any luſtre or repute in the World; of which ſort I ſuppoſe there are few more frequently attaqued then Women of Quality, that converſe among thoſe who call themſelves the Wits of the Age; who living in ſo infectious an air, had need of ſome antidotes about them; and if what I have now offer'd, appear not forcible enough, (for it pretends not to the tithe of what may be ſaid on the Subject) yet it may at leaſt do them this ſervice, to put them in mind of what they need, and ſend them to the fuller diſpenſatories of others.

The precedent digreſſion, neceſſary for perſons of quality, who are engag'd in promiſcuous converſation.

24. And that is the thing I ſhould earneſtly beg of them, that they would be ſo juſt to their own intereſt, as not to combine with ſeducers againſt themſelves; but if they have bin ſo unhappy as to lend one ear to them, yet at leaſt not to give up both to be forc'd in a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion to their dictates, but hear what may be ſaid on the other ſide. And ſure 'tis but a low compoſition for God thus to divide with *Satan*, yet 'tis that of which his Emiſſaries are ſo jealous that 'tis one of their grand Maxims, that none who profeſſes Divinity is to be advis'd with; and therefore by all Arts they are to be rendred either ridiculous, or ſuſpected; to which methinks may be applied that Fable (which *Demoſthenes* once recited to the *Athenians*, when *Alexander* demanded of them to deliver up their Orators) of the Wolves and the Sheep, who coming to a Treaty, the firſt Article of the Wolves was, that the Sheep ſhould give up their Maſtives which guarded them: the reſemblance is too obvious to need a minute application.

'Tis the Atheiſts grand maxim that none who profeſſes Divinity ſhould be conſulted with.

25. But this is manifeſtly to reverſe all former Rules, and to truſt a man rather in any Faculty then his own, and would never have prevail'd in any thing but where the ſoul is concern'd, that poor deſpicable thing where-

A propoſal which is ju'g'd moſt unreaſonable in all other inſtances.

whereon alone we think fit to make experiments. 'Tis sure, that if any should dispute their title to an earthly Possession, they would not so tamely resign it, nor would trust their own selves in its defence, but would consult their ablest Lawyers, and, by them, sift out every circumstance that might establish their claim. Why should they then suffer themselves to be talk'd out of an Heavenly Inheritance, without so much as once proposing their doubts to those whose study and profession it is to resolve them? But as in all other ills, so in this, prevention is better then cure; and therefore to those that are yet untainted, the secureſt course will be to stop both ears against all profane insinuations, and to use those who temt them to be disloyal to their God, that spiritual adultery, as they should do those who solicit them to the carnal, not so much as to enter parly, but with the greateſt indignation deteſt and reject them. 'Tis the saying of the Wise man, *Prov.* 25. 23. that *an angry countenance driveth away a back-biting tongue.* And certainly, would great Persons look severely on such defamers of Religion, they would give some check to that impudence of profaneness which has given it such a vogue in the World.

We should think it disingenious to sit unconcern'd when a friend or benefactor is reviled, and must have little value for God and religion if we can hear them traduc'd.

26. And sure this is much their Duty to do, if they own any relation to that God who is so dishonored. They would think it a very disingenious thing to sit by to hear a Friend or Benefactor reviled, and express no displesure; and is God so friendless among them, that only his traducers and blasphemers can be patiently heard? Among the Jews, at the hearing of any Blasphemy, they rent their clothes; but I fear we have some of our nice Dames that would be much more concern'd at a rip in their garment, then at the rending and violating God's Sacred Name; and could more patiently behold the total subversion of Religion, then the disorder or misplacing of a lock or riband. But 'tis to be hoped there are not many so impious, and those that are not, will surely think themselves oblig'd with all their power, to discountenance all the Fautors of irreligion, whether they be the solemn sedater sort that would argue, or the jollier that would railly them out of their Faith.

The second notion of Piety relates to practic duty.

27. But when they have thus provided against the assaults of others, and secur'd the speculative part of Religion, they have only establish'd a Judicatory against themselves, stor'd up matter of Conviction and Accusation, if they answer it not in the practic. I must therefore after this long excursion, return to my first Point, and beseech them seriously to weigh the obligations they have to Piety in the general notion of it, as it comprehends all the duties of a Christian life; of which as I intend not to speak particularly, so I know not where to find a better summary, then that which St. *James* has drawn up, chap. 1. verse 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

The acts of worship or devotion which the female Sex has great propriety in.

28. But besides this general, there is (as I said before) another more restrain'd notion of Piety, as it relates to our more immediat entercourse with God in divine Ordinances and Worship, in which respect it commonly passes under the name of Devotion, and thus consider'd it has a great propriety to the female Sex. For Devotion is a tender Plant, that will scarce root in stiff or rocky ground, but requires a supple gentle soil, and therefore the feminine softness and pliableness is very apt and proper for it. And accordingly there have bin very eminent growths of it in that Sex. I need not heap up examples of former Ages, but rather perswade this to leave some at least to the following; and the more consi-

derable

derable the perſons are, the more conſpicuous will be the Example, which ſeems the more to adapt it to thoſe I now ſpeak to. Devotion in a Cloiſter is as recluſe as the Votary, a light rather under a buſhel then on a candleſtick: and in an obſcure Cottage 'tis either not obſerv'd, or elſe thought to be but the effect of deſtitution and ſecular wants, a reſerve rather then a choice: but when thoſe who are in the eie of the world, the moſt eminent Actors on the Theater of human life, ſhall chuſe the part of a Saint, when thoſe who want none of the divertiſments or blandiſhments of earth, ſhall have their converſation in Heaven, this recommends it to the Spectators, as the true and greateſt object of human choice; ſince 'tis choſen by thoſe who know the utmoſt pretence of all its competitors.

Women of quality have few ſecular avocations.

29. Nor is devotion only more excellent in them in regard of its effects, but 'tis alſo more neceſſary in reſpect of their obligation. Devotion is an abſtraction from the world, and therefore cannot in any eminent degrees, be practiſed by thoſe whoſe neceſſities or buſineſs do much entangle them in it. So that from ſuch, a far leſs proportion will be accepted, then from thoſe, whoſe plenty and eaſe give them no other want but that of emploiment. And certainly if there be any of whom that can truly be ſaid; women of quality are the perſons: for they in this reſpect exceed even men of the like rank: for the men are often engag'd in public emploiments, and muſt lend moſt of their time to the uſe of others; or however all have the care of their own private affairs, the managery of their fortunes to employ them. But of women the utmoſt that is ordinarily requir'd, is but a little eaſie inſpection within their own walls, the overſight of a few children, and ſervants, and even from this how many are by their condition of life exemted; and how many more do by their niceneſs and delicacy exemt themſelves? And ſurely ſo perfect a vacancy is neither happy nor ſafe. And therefore God who projects we ſhould be both, never deſign'd it for any of mankind: but where he gives ſo much liberty from ſecular, he expects a greater diligence in ſpiritual emploiments.

'Tis an amazing proſpect to ſee ſouls born for immortality purſuing the uſes of the body.

30. And indeed 'tis an amazing thing to ſee, that any into whom he has breath'd the breath of life, on whom he has ſtamp'd the image of his own eternity, can think thoſe immortal ſouls were given them only to ſerve the mean and abject uſes of their corruptible bodies, (for which the ſoul of the dulleſt Animal would have done as well;) that eating and drinking, ſleep and recreations, which are only uſeful to the ſupporting us in this world, are the only things for which we were ſent hither. And yet if we may meſure their opinions by their practice, this ſeems to be the perſwaſion of many of our female Gentry, who look upon it as a degrading, a kind of attainder of their blood, to do any thing but pleaſe their ſenſes. An error ſure of the moſt pernicious conſequence imaginable. We know a Lady of pleſure is in one ſenſe a very ſcandalous Epithet, and truly 'tis no very laudable one in the other, nay which is worſe, they are often coincident, and fall in with each other. She whoſe ſole univerſal aim is pleſure, will not think her ſelf much out of her road, in the purſuit of any particular. And ſhe that thinks ſhe lives for no other purpoſe, will ſo often be at a loſs for innocent pleſure, that ſhe is almoſt under a neceſſity to call in the nocent, to ſerve the very end (as ſhe ſuppoſes) of her being. But indeed were they ſure to confine themſelves to ſuch as are harmleſs in their kind, yet the exceſs of them renders them ſinful, and the doting purſuit denominates

nates them *lovers of Pleſures more then lovers of God*, a character ſo black that the Apoſtle compleats his Catalogue of the worſt vices of the worſt times with it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 4.

Spiritual pleſures would be more entertaining as well as more noble.

31. It is therefore the great goodneſs of God to deſign a reſcue for thoſe whoſe condition expoſes them to that danger, and by exacting a liberal expence of time in their devotion, divert them from laviſhing both it and their ſouls together. Neither do's he by this defeat their aim of a pleſant life, but rather aſſiſt it: for whereas ſenſual delights are vagrant, and muſt be chaſed thro a hundred turnings and wild Mazes, the ſpiritual are fixt, and one may alwaies know where to find them. How often are the voluptuous in pain to know which pleſure to chooſe? like a ſurfeited ſtomac the greater variety is ſet before it, the more it nauſeats all. What difficulties hath a Lady many times to reſolve whether an afternoon ſhall be ſpent at the Court, or at the Theater; whether in dancing or at cards, in giving or receiving viſits, as not knowing which will beſt pleaſe her? But ſhe that knows the delights of Devotion, knows withall that there is no other fit to come in competition with it; and ſo is not diſtracted in her choice, nor need go farther then her Cloſet for the moſt agreeable entertainment. I know this will ſound a little incredible to thoſe that know no other uſe of Cloſets then as a conſervatory of gauds and baubles; that aſpire to no pleſure there above that of children, the playing with the Pictures and Puppets that adorn it. Nor indeed do I pretend that ſuch ſhall find thoſe ſatisfactions I ſpeak of. Thoſe whoſe errand is to *Beelzebub* the God of flies, muſt not expect to be treated by the God of *Iſrael*. An ingenuous man will ſcorn to obtrude himſelf on thoſe who deſire not his company, and ſure God will not make himſelf more cheap. Thoſe that will meet him in their Cloſets, muſt come with that deſign, reſort thither as to an Oratory; nay more then ſo, they muſt come frequently. Spiritual joies know not the way to a place where they are not often invited: and as men ſeek for each other not in places where they ſeldom or never come, but where they daily frequent; ſo God contrives, not to meet us in that place where we appear rarely and accidentally, but where we uſually reſort.

Of public devotion to which that of the cloſet muſt prepare.

32. I ſhall not need to branch out devotion into the ſeveral parts, that being done already in a multitude of other Treatiſes, of which if they pleaſe to conſult any one, they cannot want a Directory for their worſhip, whether private or public. Only let me obſerve the order and connexion of thoſe two, that they are neither to be ſever'd nor yet to be rang'd prepoſterouſly. The private muſt not juſtle out the public, for God expects his ſolemn homage: and their hudling it up in private, as it may give men ground to ſuſpect they pay none at all; ſo neither God nor man can collect any thing better from it, then that they are aſham'd of the Deity they pretend to ſerve. On the other ſide the public muſt as little ſwallow up the private, and where it do's, there may be a juſt doubt of its ſincerity. Many attractives there may be to Church beſides that of Piety, and indeed where that is really the motive, it teaches ſo much reverence to that awful preſence they are to approch, as not to come without ſome preparation. What ſolicitude, what critical niceneſs will a Lady have for her dreſs, when ſhe is to appear at a ſolemn meeting at Court, and ſhall ſhe take no care how ſordidly, how undecently ſhe appear when the King of Kings gives audience? Shall many hours, daies, nay perhaps weeks, be taken up in contriving for the one, and ſhall there never be a minute allotted for the other? This were ſure very une-

qual,

qual, and yet this is the caſe where the devotion of the Cloſet do's not prepare for that of the Church. If the mind be not firſt tun'd there, it will be very ill qualified for that harmony of ſouls, which is the only thing God regards in our public offices. So that were there no other uſe of private devotion, but as it relates to the public, that were enough to ſpeak the neceſſity of it.

33. But indeed 'tis not only a needful preparative to that ſacred commerce, but to our civil. The World is but a larger ſort of Peſthouſe, in every corner of it we meet with infectious airs, and thoſe that converſe in it had need of this Antidote. How many temtations do's every place, every hour, every interview, preſent to the ſhocking even of that moral integrity which a ſober Heathen would judg fit to preſerve; much more of that ſtrict Piety our Chriſtianity exacts? *As alſo for civil commerce.*

34. 'Twas the obſervation that *Origen* made of himſelf, that the day in which he ſo ſhamefully fell by ſacrificing to Idols, he had ventur'd out in the morning before he had compleated his uſual praiers; the Devil finding him ſo unarm'd took advantage to aſſault him, as knowing he had then but a ſingle impotent man to wreſtle with, who had forfeited, by not invoking, the protection of God. And indeed ſince praier is the moſt powerful exorciſm to eject him, we may well conclude, the omiſſion of it is a likely means to invite him: for if God have not the prepoſſeſſion, if we do not by hearty praier ſurrender our ſouls to him in the morning, they are then all the day after like that emty houſe mention'd in the Goſpel, a fit receptacle for as many evil ſpirits as pleaſe to inhabit there. Nor are theſe ſpiritual the only dangers that attend us, we are liable to a multitude of ſecular ones alſo: our perſons, our fortunes, our reputations, every thing wherein we can receive a benefit, renders us equally capable of a prejudice. What multitudes of accidents are there to which we lie open, and nothing to guard us from them but the divine Providence? which if we neglect to ſolicit we are ſure very unworthy of its defence. And this is a conſideration that methinks ſhould bring even the moſt ſenſual perſons upon their knees: for tho too many may be found that deſpiſe the former danger, and can contentedly enough expoſe their ſouls, yet ſuch are uſually the moſt tender of their temporal concerns, it being commonly the exceſſive love of thoſe which makes them neglect the other. She that fears not the fall into ſin, will yet fear the tumbling into a precipice, and tho ſhe care not for the ſpotting of her innocence, would be very loth any accident ſhould blemiſh her face, diſparage her fame, or impoveriſh her fortune, and yet from any or all of theſe ſhe is utterly unable to guard her ſelf. So that if Piety will not, yet intereſt methinks ſhould render her an homager to that omnipotent power, from whence alone ſhe can derive her ſafety. Origen's *miſcarriage was preceded by the neglect of praier.*

35. And now methinks a Duty that is thus bound on with the cords of a man, with human as well as divine perſuaſives, ſhould not eaſily be ſhaken off. I wiſh I could ſay it never is, but I fear there are ſome of thoſe I now ſpeak to, who neglect it in ſpight of all theſe inducements; who tho they can pretend nothing ſerious enough to own the name of buſineſs, do yet ſuffer a ſucceſſion of I know not what impertinencies to divert them. And indeed were the expence of ſome Ladies daies calculated, we ſhould find every hour ſo full of emtineſs, ſo overladen with vanities, that 'tis ſcarce imaginable where an office of devotion ſhould croud in. *Praier as much our intereſt, as duty.*

Yet vanity and diverſion leave no room for it.

36. The morning is divided between ſleep and dreſſing, nor would the morning ſuffice, but that they are fain to make a new computation to meſure it, not by the Sun, but by their time of dining, which is often as late as the ſtationary hours of the Primitive Faſts, tho upon a far differing motive. The afternoons being by this means reduc'd, are too ſhort for thoſe many divertiſments that await them, and muſt therefore borrow as much of the night as they lent to the morning. And when the meer fatigue of pleſures ſend a Lady to her reſt, 'tis not imaginable that ſhe will permit Devotion to induce a yet greater, and more diſagreeable laſſitude, ſo that the whole round of her time ſeems to be a kind of magic circle, wherein nothing that is holy muſt appear. And indeed 'tis none of the higheſt ſtratagems of *Satan* thus to foreſtal their time; and by a perpetual ſupply of diverſions, inſenſibly ſteal from them the opportunities of divine Offices; an artifice by which I preſume he prevails on ſome, who would ſtartle at his groſſer and more apparent temtations.

The omiſſion of praier is to live without God in the world.

37. Nor needs he more then the ſucceſs of this project; for if this habitual neglect of Piety ſhould not finally end in great and criminal commiſſions, (as 'tis naturally very apt to do) yet his intereſt is ſufficiently ſecur'd by ſuch a cuſtomary omiſſion, which amounts to no leſs then the living *without God in the World:* a ſtate ſo hopeleſs, that when the Apoſtle recollects to the Epheſians the wretchedneſs of their Gentile State, he do's it in thoſe very words, *Eph.* 2. 12. And ſure, thoſe that live ſo under Chriſtianity, are not in a better, but worſe condition, by how much contemt of God is more unpardonable then ignorance.

Praier will be beſt ſecur'd by being the firſt work of the day.

38. It therefore infinitly concerns thoſe who are in danger of ſo fatal a ſnare, to look about them, and endevor to countermine *Satan*, and be as induſtrious to ſecure their duty, as he is to ſupplant it; and to this purpoſe, one of the uſefulleſt expedients I know, is to be aforehand with him; I mean, to make their Devotions the firſt buſineſs of the day; by which I intend not only thoſe Ejaculations wherewith we all ſhould open our eies, but their more ſet and ſolemn Praiers; a Practice ſo highly expedient to the perſons forementiond, that it falls little ſhort of neceſſary; and that upon ſeveral reaſons.

If morning praier be not begun till the Ladies dreſſing be finiſht, 'twill be a mockery and be really evening praier.

39. Firſt, in relation to one of the great ends of Morning Praier, which is to ſupplicate the guidance and protection of God for the whole day. Now if this be not done till ſome Ladies Dreſſings be finiſh'd, 'twill be half a mockery, a moſt prepoſterous requeſt, as to the greateſt part of the day, which will be paſt before; and beſides the abſurdity, there is danger in it; for all the preceding time is as it were outlaw'd by it, put from under the Divine Protection. Alas, are God's ſafeguards to be only meridional, to ſhine out only with the noon-day Sun? Do they ſuppoſe *Satan* keeps their hours, and ſtirs not abroad till the afternoon, that there is no danger either of corporal or ſpiritual miſchiefs before that time of the day? Certainly, if *the noiſe of the harp and the viol* which *Iſaiah* mentions, ch. 5. 12. do not drown it, they may often hear a morning as well as evening Paſſing-bell. With how many others do's the glaſs of life run out, whilſt they are at their looking-glaſſes? How many bodies are maim'd and wounded in the time they are trimming and decking theirs? And *who made them differ from others*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7? Or what tenure have they in the ſafety of one moment, ſave what they ow to God's Providence? And what rational expectation can they have of that, when they do not invoke it?

40. Nor

40. Nor are the ſpiritual dangers leſs, but rather much more; and they muſt be very ſlight obſervers of themſelves, if they not diſcern that ſnares may be laid for them in their receſſes in their chambers, as well as in places of the moſt public reſort. Indeed, were there no other then what relates to their dreſs, and curioſity thereof, it were enough to evidence their danger; ſcarce any part of that but a temtation in it: to Pride, if it hit right, and pleaſe their fancy: to Anger and Vexation, if it do not. They had need therefore to put on their armor before their ornaments, by a prepoſſeſſion of Praier and Meditation to ſecure their vitals, leſt by an internal death of Grace, their bodies (in their utmoſt luſter) prove but the painted Sepulcher of their ſouls. *They have reaſon to put on their armor, before their ornaments.*

41. In the ſecond place, this appears requiſit in oppoſition to the indecency and incongruity of the contrary. How inverted an eſtimate do they make of things that poſtpone the intereſts of their ſouls, to the meaneſt member of their bodies, pay a ſupererrogating attendance to the one, before the other comes at all into their care. But what is yet worſe, how vile a contumely is offer'd to the Majeſty of God, who is uſed as they do their dunning Creditors, poſted off with an excuſe of no leſure yet to ſpeak with him; whilſt in the mean time all the factors for their vanity can have ready acceſs and full audience. God muſt attend till their Tailor, their Shoomaker pleaſe to diſmiſs them, and at the beſt, can be allowed only to bring up the rear of a whole ſhole of Artificers. *'Tis prepoſterous to preferr the intereſts of the ſoul, to thoſe of the meaneſt members of the body.*

42. But thirdly, 'tis very doubtful whether he ſhall obtain ſo much from them; for it may often happen that he ſhall be quite precluded: ſo numerous are the parts of a modiſh equipage, and ſo exact a ſymmetry is requir'd in the whole, that 'tis the buſineſs of many hours to compleat it; when as 'twas ſaid of the Roman Ladies, a council muſt be call'd about the placing of an hair that ſits irregularly, when one thing after another ſhall be tried, and again rejected, as not exact, or not becoming; time all the while inſenſibly ſteals away, and tho that will not ſtay for them, yet dinner doth, and then their bellies begin to murmur to pay any longer attendance on their backs, and claim the next turn; and between theſe two competitors, 'tis odds Devotion will be quite excluded, or reduc'd only to a grace before meat: (and well if that, conſidering how unfaſhionable even that is grown.) In the mean time, what a wretched improvidence is it, to reduce the one neceſſary buſineſs of the day to ſuch uncertainties, nay almoſt to a certain diſappointment. *Moſt probably the whole dreſſing will not be finiſht till dinner calls.*

43. Yet ſuppoſe this hazard were only imaginary, and a Lady were infallibly ſure not to loſe the time for her Praiers; yet in the fourth place, ſhe will be likely by ſuch preceding diverſions to loſe much of her zeal in them, ſo that if they be ſaid at all, they will ſcarce be ſaid in a due manner. There is alas ſuch a repugnancy in our nature to any thing ſpiritual, that we cannot cloſe in an inſtant; but as a benummed, frozen body will need ſome rubbing and chafing before it can be fit for motion; ſo our more frozen ſouls require ſome previous incitations before they can with any vigor exert themſelves in Devotion. Now ſure the dreſſing time (I mean ſuch a dreſſing as we now ſuppoſe) is not very proper for ſuch preparations. 'Tis, on the contrary, extreme apt to indiſpoſe and unfit them; for when the fancy is poſſeſt with ſo many little images of vanity, they will not eaſily be ejected. That ranging faculty is, God knows, too apt to bring in even the remoteſt diverſions; but when it has ſuch a ſtock ready at hand, how will it pour them in upon the mind, to the great allaying, if not utter extinguiſhing of Devotion. *If the time of praier be not ſupplanted, yet the zeal will.*

There is somwhat of omen in beginnings.

44. When all theſe conſiderations are put together, 'twill ſure appear wholſome counſel, that ſuch perſons ſhould not truſt ſo important a Duty to ſo many caſualties, but in the firſt place ſecure a time for that, repair to their Oratory before their dreſſing room, and by an early conſecration of themſelves to God, defeat *Satan*'s claim, and diſcourage his attemts for the reſt of the day. We know there is a natural efficacy in a good beginning, towards the producing a good ending: but in ſpiritual things the influence is yet greater, becauſe it draws in Auxiliaries from above, and engages the yet farther aſſiſtances of Grace. Upon which account I am apt to believe, that where this Duty is ſincerely and fervently performed in the morning, it will not totally be neglected in the ſucceeding parts of the day. 'Twill be eaſy to diſcern the ſame obligation, the ſame advantage of cloſing the day with God, that there was to begin it; and when thoſe two boundaries are ſecured, when thoſe are lookt upon as ſtrict duty, and conſtantly obſerved, 'tis not unlikely but their Piety may grow generous, and with *David*, *Pſ.* 55. 17. add to the *evening and morning a noon-day office*; for where Devotion is real, 'tis apt to be progreſſive; and the more we converſe with God, the more we ſhall deſire to do ſo. Thus we ſee how this little cloud like that of *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 18. 44. may *over-ſpread the Heavens*, and this handful of firſt-fruits may hallow the whole day.

There is more, a kind of right acquir'd by having the firſt poſſeſſion.

45. Nay indeed, when it has advanced thus far, 'twill probably go farther; 'twill not keep it ſelf only on the defenſive part, but invade its oppoſits, get daily ground of thoſe vanities by which it was before oppreſs. For when a Lady has in her Cloſet waſht her cheeks with penitential tears, ſhe cannot ſure when ſhe comes out, think them prepared for the varniſh of the paint and fucus. When ſhe has attentively examined her Conſcience, that impartial mirror, and there diſcern'd all the blemiſhes of her nobler part, ſhe will ſure with ſomwhat a more cold concern conſult her looking-glaſs. And when ſhe has by pious vows and reſolutions *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 13. 14. 'twill be impoſſible for her to be very anxiouſly careful about her garments. This devout temper of her mind will by a holy *leger-demain* ſhuffle the Romances out of her hand, and ſubſtitute the Oracles of Truth; will not let her dream away her time in phantaſtic ſcenes, and elaborate nothing, but promt her *to give all diligence to make her Calling and Election ſure.* In a word, when ſhe once underſtands what it is to ſpend one hour devoutly, ſhe will endeavor to reſcue all the reſt from trifles and impertinent entertainments; and imploy them to purpoſes more worthy the great end of her being. Thus may ſhe almoſt inſenſibly wind her ſelf out of the ſnare, diſintangle her ſelf from thoſe temtations wherewith ſhe was enwrapt; and by having her *heart ſo ſet at liberty*, *may run the waies of God's Commandments*, *Pſ.* 119.

Private devotion cannot commute for the omiſſion of public.

46. But privat Devotions, tho of excellent effect, cannot commute for the omiſſion of Public; nor indeed can it long maintain its vigor, unleſs ſometimes cheriſhed by the warmth of Chriſtian Aſſemblies: and if God pleaſe to viſit them in their Cloſets, they are (even by their own Laws of Civility) obliged to return Viſits, and attend him in his houſe. I fear too many adapt the inſtance in the Formality too, and come as unconcernedly to him as they do to one another. 'Tis true, thoſe that pay him a cordial reverence at whom, will certainly do it at the Church; and therefore by the little we ſee performed by ſome there, we may doubt God ſees as little in their Retirements. But what ſpeak I of an hearty

hearty Reverence, when 'tis viſible that there are thoſe who pay none at all? How rare a ſight is it for ſome Ladies to appear at Church? How many times (I had almoſt ſaid hundreds) do we ſee their Coaches ſtand at the Play-houſe, for once at God's? They ſeem to own no diſtinction of daies, unleſs it be, that Sunday is their moſt vacant ſeaſon to take Phyſic, or to lie a-bed; and if ſuch do ever come to Church, Devotion is like to be the leaſt of their errand. Some new garment perhaps or dreſs is to be ſhew'd, and that thought the place where the moſt critical Judges of thoſe things will be moſt at leiſure to obſerve them: or if they come not to teach new faſhions, it may be they come to learn; and ſuch documents will be ſurer to be put in practiſe then any in the Sermon. Poſſibly they expect to ſee ſome friend or acquaintance there, and as if Chriſt were to be ſerved (as he was born) in an Inn, make his houſe the common rendezvouz in which to meet their Aſſociates. If they have any more ingenious attractives, 'tis commonly that of Curioſity, to here ſome new celebrated Preacher, and that rather for his Rhetoric then his Divinity; and this Motive (tho the beſt of the ſet) is but like that which prevail'd with thoſe *Jews* St. *John* mentions, who came to *Jeſus that they might ſee Lazarus*, Jo. 12.

47. I ſhall not rank among theſe Motives, that of Hypocriſie and ſeeming Holineſs, for from that all the reſt do acquit them. Indeed 'tis the only ſin which this Age has ſeemed to reform, and that too only by way of *Antiperiſtaſis*, not by the Vertu but the Iniquity of the Times. Religion is grown ſo unfaſhionable, ſo contemtible, that none can be now temted to put on ſo ridiculous a diſguiſe. And altho as to ſingle perſons I confeſs Hypocriſie one of the deepeſt Guilts, ſuch as has a peculiar portion aſſign'd it by Chriſt in the place of torment, *Mat.* 23. 15. yet as to Communities, I cannot but think it better to have a face of Religion then Profaneneſs. The example of the former may work beyond its ſelf, and Form of Godlineſs in ſome may produce the Power of it in others; but a pattern of Profaneſs, the farther it operates the worſe, and all the progreſs it can make, is from one wickedneſs to another, ſo that I fear as St. *Bernard* wiſht for his feaver again, ſo the Church may ere long for her Hypocrites.

Hypocriſie is now an almoſt outdated ingredient of the offices of devotion.

48. But to recal my ſelf from this digreſſion, let us a little enquire how thoſe, whom the foremention'd Motives bring to Church, behave themſelves there; and that is indeed with great conformity to the ends of their coming, their errand is not to be Suppliants, neither do they put themſelves in the poſture, kneeling is impertinent for them who mean not to pray, but as the Apoſtle deſcribes the Idolatrous ſervice of the *Iſraelites*, *They ſat down to eat and drink and roſe up to play*; ſo theſe ſit down to talk and laugh with their Pew-fellows, and riſe up to gape and look about them. When they ſhould be confeſſing their ſins to almighty God, they are apologizing (perhaps) to one another for the omiſſion of a ceremonious viſit, or ſom other breach of civility; when they ſhould be *obſerving the goings of God in the Sanctuary*, Pſa. 68. they are inquiring when this Lady came to Town, or when that goes out; nay perhaps the Theater is brought into the Temple, the laſt Play they ſaw is recollected, and Quotations enough brought thence to vie with the Preacher. 'Tis impoſſible to reckon up all their Topics of diſcourſe, nay it were indeed ſcandalous for one that reproves them to pretend to know by how many impertinencies (to ſay no worſe) they profane that holy Place and Time.

Profaneſs takes up the whole.

49. But

Heatheniſm and Mahometaniſm will riſe up in judgment againſt us Chriſtians.

49. But that allſeeing eye in whoſe preſence they are, keeps an exact account, and will charge them not only with the principal but the product; not only with their own irreverences, but with thoſe which by their example or encouragement they have occaſion'd in others, nay farther even with that ſcandal which redounds to Chriſtianity by it. For when one that is to chooſe a Religion, ſhall read the Precepts of *Pythagoras* enjoining that the Gods muſt not be worſhipt in paſſing by, as it were accidentally, but with the greateſt ſolemnity and intention, when they ſhall conſider the care of *Numa* in inſtituting Officers, who at Sacrifices and all divine Services, ſhould call upon the people to keep ſilence and advert to Devotion, or but the practiſe of the preſent *Mahometans*, who permit none to ſit in their *Moſchos*, nor to pray without proſtration: When I ſay this is conſidered, and compar'd with the ſcandalous indecency obſervable in our Churches, he will certainly exclude Chriſtianity from all competition in his choice; not allow that the name of a Religion, whoſe very Worſhip appears ſo profane, and whoſe Votaries mock the God they pretend to ſerve.

The female Sex are leſs obnoxious then the other.

50. Yet how ſevere ſoever the charge may lie againſt ſome, I am far from including all under it. I know there are many Ladies whoſe examples are reproches to the other Sex, that help to fill our Congregations when Gentlemen deſert them, and to whom ſomtimes we alone ow that our Churches are not furniſhed like the Feaſt in the Parable, *Luke* 14. 21. meerly out of *the high waies and hedges, with the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; yet ſome even of theſe may be liable to ſome irregularity, which may be the effects of inadvertency or miſperſwaſion, tho not of contemt or profaneſs.

The indevotion of late coming to praiers diſturbs others.

51. And firſt 'tis obſervable in ſome who come conſtantly, that yet they come not early, ſo that a conſiderable part of Praiers is paſt ere they enter the Church. This firſt cauſes ſome diſturbance to others, the ſucceſſive entry of new comers keeping the Congregation in a continual motion and agitation; which how unagreeable it is to Devotion, *Numa* a Heathen Prince may teach us, who *Plutarch* tells us took a particular care, that in the time of divine worſhip, no knocking, clapping, or other noiſe ſhould be heard; as well knowing how much the operations of the intellect are obſtructed by any thing that importunes the Senſes. What would he have ſaid, ſhould he come into one of our City Congregations, where often during the whole time of Praier, the clapping of Pew-doors do's outnoiſe the Reader?

Looſes the fundamental part of devotion the confeſſing of ſin.

52. But beſides the indecency of the thing and the interruption it gives to others, 'tis very injurious to themſelves; a kind of partial excommunication of their own inflicting, which excludes them from part of the divine Offices, and from that part too which is of the moſt univerſal Concern, I mean the confeſſion of ſins, which the wiſdom of our Church has fitly placed in the beginning of her Service, as the neceſſary introduction to all the reſt. For conſidering how obnoxious we are all to the wrath and vengeance of God, our firſt buſineſs is to deprecate that by an humble confeſſion of our guilt. Would any Malefactor that has forfeited his life to Juſtice, come boldly to his Prince, and without taking notice of his crimes, importune him to beſtow the greateſt favors and dignities upon him? Yet 'tis the very ſame abrupt impudence in us, to ſupplicate the Divine Majeſty before we attemt to atone him, to ask good things from him before we have acknowledg-

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ed the ill we have don againſt him. And to ſuch God may juſtly make ſuch a return as *Auguſtus* did to one that had entertained him much below his Greatneſs, I knew not before that we were ſuch familiars.

53. It will much better become them to anticipate the time, *to wait at the poſts of his doors*, *Prov.* 8. 31. and contrive to be there before the Service begins, that ſo by previous recollection they may put their minds in a fit poſture of addreſs at the public Audience: which (by the way) ſpeaks it to be no very laudable cuſtom which almoſt univerſally prevails, that thoſe few who do come early, ſpend the interval before ſervice in talking with one another, by which they do not only loſe the advantage of that time for preparation, but convert it into the direct contrary, do thereby actually unfit and indiſpoſe themſelves. God knows our hearts, even in their moſt compoſed temper, are to apt to create diverſions; we need not ſtart game for them to chaſe, and by prefacing our Praier with ſecular diſcourſe, make a game for the ſame thoughts to return upon us in them. Beſides, in relation to the place, it has a ſpice of Profaneſs, 'tis the bringing the Moabite and Ammonite into the Temple, *Deut.* 23. 3. a kind of invaſion on God's Propriety, by introducing our worldly concerns or divertiſments into the houſe which is called by his name, ſolemnly dedicated to him, and therefore dedicated that it might be his peculiar. So that with a little variation, we may to ſuch apply the expoſtulatory reproof of the Apoſtle to the Corinthians. 1 *Cor.* 11. 22. *what, have ye not houſes to talk and converſe in, or deſpiſe ye the Church of God?* But this is, I confeſs, a reproof that will not reach to many, there being ſo few of the better ſort that come early enough to talk before Service, and as for thoſe who talk at it, we have already rankt them under another *Claſſis*. Yet give me leave to add, that thoſe fall not much ſhort of that degree of profaneſs, who come late only becauſe they are loth to riſe, or to abate any thing of the curioſity of their dreſs. For ſhe that prefers her ſloth or her vanity before God's Service, is like (how decently ſoever ſhe behave ſelf) to give but an unſignificant attendance at it.

Talking before ſervice begins, renders unfit for the duty.

54. But I gueſs this may in many proceed from another cauſe, which tho leſs ill in their intentions, is not ſo in reſpect either of its unreaſonableneſs, or its effects, and that is an unequal eſtimate they make of the parts of God's Service. This laſt Age has brought in ſuch a partiality for Preaching, that Praier ſeems comparatively (like *Sarah* to *Hagar*) deſpicable in their eies: ſo that if they can but come time enough to the Sermon, they think they have diſcharged the weightier part of the Law, and of their own duty. This miſperſwaſion, tho it have too generally diffuſed it ſelf thro both Sexes, yet ſeems to have been very eſpecially imbibed by the Female. And beſides the evidence that Sunday gives, the week-daies afford no leſs. Let there be a Lecture tho at the remoteſt part of the Town, what hurrying is there to it, but let the Bell tole never ſo loud for the Canonical hours of Common Praier, 'twill not call the neareſt of the Neighbourhood. I ſpeak not of thoſe who are at defiance with our Service, and have lifted themſelves in ſeparate Congregations (for I intend not to trace them thro their wild mazes) but of thoſe who yet own our Church, and object not to its Offices, but only have ſuffered their value for them to be inſenſibly undermined by their greater zeal for Preaching. God ſure intends an Harmony in all ſacred Ordinances, and would not have ſet up a Party againſt each other, but mutually aſſiſt each others operation upon us. Thus Praier diſpoſes us to receive benefit by Preach-

The unequal value of ſermons, has ſupplanted praier.

ing, and Preaching teaches us how to Pray aright; and God grant we may long enjoy the public opportunities of both. Yet since this *Age* has brought them to a competition, I must take leave to say, that if we come impartially to weigh Praier and Preaching, the Ballance will incline another way then it seems with many to do, and we shall find Praier the more essential part of Religion.

The difference of the use of preaching to heathens and Christians.

55. The end of Preaching is twofold, either to teach us what we know not, or excite us to practice what we already know: now in relation to the first of these ends, I suppose there is a wide difference between Preaching at the first promulgation of the Gospel, and now. 'Twas then the only way of reveling to the World the whole mystery of our Salvation, so that the Apostles inference was then irrefragable, *How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher? Rom.* 10. 14. But where Christianity is planted, and the New Testament receiv'd, we have therein the whole Doctrin of Christ; nay we have not only the matter, but the very form of many of those Sermons which Christ and his Apostles Preach'd; so that unless we think them not sufficiently gifted, we cannot but acknowledg we have in them ample instruction, both for Faith and Manners; enough, as the Apostle speaks, to *make us wise unto Salvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And the reading of those being a considerable part of our Churches Service, we have the most genuin Preaching even before the Minister ascends the Pulpit. Besides, for the help of those whose youth or incapacity disables them from making collections thence for themselves, our Church has epitomiz'd the most necessary Points of Belief and Practice in the Catechism, not (as the Roman) to preclude their farther search, but to supply them in the interim till they are qualified for it; and by that early infusion of Christian Principles, to secure them of that knowledg which is simply necessary to their Salvation.

Our concern lies chiefly in that end of preaching which is the exciting to practice.

56. Now sure, to people in this state, Preaching is not of so absolute necessity in respect of instruction, as it was for those who from Heathenism and Idolatry were to be brought first to the Knowledg, and then to the Faith of Christ. We seem therefore now more generally concern'd in the other end of Preaching, the exciting us to Practice; for alas, there are few of us who stumble on sin for want of light, but either thro heedlesness, and want of looking before us, or else by a wilful prostration of our selves to it; so that we often need to be roused out of our negligence, to be frighted out of our stubbornness, and by a close application of those Truths we either forget or suppress, be animated to our Duty. And for this purpose Preaching is doubtless of excellent use, and the nauseating of it shews a very sick constitution of mind; yet sure the overgreedy desire may be a Disease also. He that eats more then he can concoct, do's not so much assist as oppress nature, and those that run from Sermon to Sermon, that allow themselves no time to chew, much less to digest what they hear, will sooner confound their brains then better their lives. Nay, it oft betraies them to a very pernicious delusion, it diverts them from many of the practical parts of Piety, and yet gives them a confidence that they are extraordinarily Pious; and by their belief that Religion consists principally in hearing, makes them forget to try themselves by that more infallible test of doing God's will. So that whereas God never design'd Preaching for more then a guide in their way, they make it their way, and their end too; and Hearing must, like a circle, begin and terminate in it self.

57. I

57. I am ſure in ſecular concerns, we ſhould think him a very unprofitable ſervant, that after his Lord had given him directions what to do, ſhould be ſo tranſported with hearing his inſtructions, that he ſhould deſire to have it infinitly repeated, and ſo ſpend the time wherein he ſhould do the work. And we have reaſon to think God will make the ſame judgment of thoſe who do the like in his ſervice.

'Twould be the part of an unprofitable ſervant to pleaſe himſelf only in hearing his Lords commands.

58. One would now think that this ravenous appetite of hearing ſhould ſuperſede all niceneſs in it, yet we find it do's not, but that ſome make a ſhift to be at once voracious and ſqueamiſh. If this ſpiritual food be not artificially dreſt, 'tis too groſs for their palats; the Phraſe muſt be elegant, the words well accented, and the *inticing words of mans wiſdom* which St. *Paul* diſclaims in his Preaching, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. is that which they principally regard. Nay the memory of the Preacher becomes the moſt materiall Point of his Sermon, and the firſt glance on his Book prejudges him. I need not add the extravagancies of an uncouth tone, a furious vehemence, or phantaſtic geſture, wherein the ſoul and vital efficacy of Preaching has bin ſolemnly placed. Now 'tis evident all theſe are but trivial Accompliſhments; ſo that thoſe who inſiſt ſo much on them, do make Preaching much leſs Sacred and Divine then indeed it is; and therefore cannot without abſurdity lay the main ſtreſs of Religion upon it, or make that the higheſt of God's Ordinances, which ow's all its gratefulneſs with them to the Endowments of men. Some may think I purſue this ſubject too far, but I am ſure I do it not with deſign to derogate from the juſt reſpect due to Preaching; only I would not have it monopolize our eſteem, or juſtle out another Duty, which is of more conſtant uſe, and indiſpenſible neceſſity.

'Tis ſtrange the ravenous appetite of hearing ſhould conſiſt with niceneſs.

59. And ſuch certainly is Praier, that reſpiration of the ſoul, which is ſo neceſſary, that it admits not of long intermiſſion, and therefore ſeems to carry the ſame proportion to hearing, which breathing do's to eating: we may make long intervals of feeding, and yet ſubſiſt; but if we ſhould do ſo in breathing, we cannot recover it. Praier is like the morning and evening Sacrifice under the Law, which God ordain'd ſhould be perpetual; whereas Preaching is but like the Readings in the Synagogues on Sabbaths and Feſtivals. Indeed, however we have confounded the terms, 'tis Praier only that can properly be call'd the worſhip of God; 'tis that by which we pay him his ſolemn homage, acknowledg his ſoveraignty, and our own dependance. When we hear, we do no more then what every Diſciple do's to his Maſter; but when we pray, we own him as the ſpring and ſource of all the good we expect, as the Author of our Being, and the Object of our Adoration: in a word, we do by it profeſs him our God; it being an impreſs of meer natural Religion to ſupplicate the Deity we acknowledg.

Praier is the breathing of the ſoul.

60. And as by Praier we render the greateſt Honor to God, ſo likewiſe do we procure the greateſt advantages to our ſelves. Praier is the powerfull Engin, by which we draw down Bleſſings; 'tis the key which lets us into the immenſe Store-houſe of the Almighty; nay 'tis that upon which the Efficacy of Preaching depends. The Word is but a dead letter without the Spirit; and God has promiſed the Spirit to none but thoſe that ask it, *Luke* 11. 13. So that Praier is that which enlivens and inſpirits our moſt ſacred actions: and accordingly in Scripture we find it ſtill a concomitant in all Eccleſiaſtical Concerns. When an Apoſtle was to be ſubſtituted in the room of *Judas*, we find they referr'd it not to the deciſion of lots, till God, who had the ſole diſpoſing of them, *Prov.* 16. 33.

Equally neceſſary as it.

had bin invoked by ſolemn Praier, *Acts* 1. 24. So when *Barnabas* and *Saul* were to be ſeparated to the Miniſtry, tho the appointment were by the Holy Ghoſt, yet that ſuperſeded not the neceſſity of Praier; the Apoſtles praied, (yea, and faſted too) before they laid their hand on them, *Acts* 13. 3. Nay, our Bleſſed Savior Himſelf, tho He knew *what was in man*, and needed no guidance but his own Omniſcience in his choice: yet we find that before his Election of the twelve Apoſtles, he continued a whole night in Praier to God, *Luke* 6. 12. doubtleſs to teach us how requiſit Praier is in all our important intereſts, which like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire to the Iſraelites, is our beſt Convoy thro the Wilderneſs, thro all the ſnares and temtations, thro all the calamities and diſtreſſes of this World, and our moſt infallible Guide to the Land of Promiſe.

Praier is ſtrengthned by union.

61. And ſure when all theſe are the properties of Praier, tho privat, they will not leſs belong to the public; ſuch a conſpiration and union of importunate Devotion muſt have a proportionable increaſe in its effect; and if Heaven can ſuffer violence by the fervor of one ſingle Votary, with what ſtorms, what batteries will it be forc'd by a numerous Congregation? We find the Church is, by Chriſt, compared to *an Army with banners*, *Cant.* 6. 3. but ſure never is this Army in ſo good array, in ſo invincible a poſture as upon its knees. The Eccleſiaſtical ſtory tells us of a Legion of Chriſtians in *Aurelius*'s Camp, who in that poſture diſcomfited two aſſailants at once, the enemy and the drought. That breath which they ſent up in Praiers, like a kindly exhalation return'd in rain, and reliev'd the periſhing Army: and had we but the ſame fervor, and the ſame innocency, could we lift up but as pure hands as they did, there would be no Bleſſing beyond our reach. But the leſs any of us find our ſelves ſo qualified, the more need we have to put our ſelves among thoſe that are.

It has a holy contagion and by its flame is apt to enkindle others.

62. There is an happy contagion in goodneſs; like green wood we may perhaps be kindled by the neighboring flame: the example of anothers zeal may awake mine. However, there is ſome advantage in being in the company: thoſe ſhowers of benediction which their Praiers bring down, are ſo plentiful, that ſome drops at leaſt may ſcatter upon thoſe about them. We find *Eliſha* for *Jehoſhaphat*'s ſake, endur'd the preſence of *Jehoram*, whom otherwiſe he profeſſes he would not have lookt towards, 2 *Kings* 3. 14. and God may perhaps do the like in this caſe; and as he proſper'd *Potiphar* for *Joſeph*'s ſake, *Gen.* 39. 23. ſo the Piety of ſome few may redound to the benefit of all. From all theſe conſiderations I ſuppoſe may ſufficiently be evinc'd the neceſſity and benefit of public Praier, and conſequently the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe, who upon any pretence neglect it. I ſhall now only beſeech thoſe to whom I ſpeak to make the application to themſelves, and to ſhew they do ſo by their more early and more aſſiduous attendance on it.

Communicating the higheſt act of devotion, unhappily neglected.

63. There is alſo another Duty to which many of theſe to whom I write ſeem to need ſome incitation, and that is Communicating, a part of Devotion which the looſer ſort ſcarce ever think in ſeaſon till their death beds; as if that Sacrament like the Romaniſts Extreme Unction, were only fit for expiring ſouls: but to ſuch we may apply the words of the Angel to the woman, *Luke* 24. 5. *Why ſeek ye the living among the dead?* Why think ye that the Sun of Righteouſneſs is only to ſhine in the ſhades of death, or that Chriſt is never to give us his fleſh, till we are putting off our own? 'Tis one principal end of that Sacrament to engage and enable us to a new life; how prepoſterous then is it, how utterly inconſiſtent

ſtent with that end to defer it to the hour of death. 'Tis true 'tis a good *Viaticum* for ſuch as are in their way towards bliſs, but it is too bold a hope to fancy that it ſhall in an inſtant bring them into that way, who have their whole life poſted on in the contrary. The roads to Heaven and Hell lie ſure too far aſunder to be within diſtance of one ſtep; nor can it with any ſafety be preſum'd that once receiving at their death, ſhall expiat ſo many wilful neglects of it in their life.

Or if not totally omitted, infrequently attended.

64. But I ſhall ſuppoſe theſe total Omiſſions are not a common guilt: yet with many others the fault differs only in degree, they do not wholly omit, but yet come ſo infrequently as if they thought it a very arbitrary matter whether they come or no. And this truly is obſervable in many who ſeem to give good attendance on other parts of divine Worſhip: for indeed 'tis a ſad ſpectacle to ſee, that let a Church be never ſo much crouded at Sermon, 'tis emtied in an inſtant when the Communion begins: people run as it were frighted from it, as if they thought with thoſe in *Malachy*, that *the table of our Lord is polluted*, *Mal.* 1. 12. that ſome peſt or infection would thence break forth upon them. A ſtrange indignity to the Majeſty, and ingratitude to the love of our Redeemer. Let a King, or but ſome great man make a public entertainment, how hard is it to keep back the preſſing multitude: many Officers are neceſſary to repel the uninvited gueſts: and yet here there needs more to drive us to it, tho the invitation be more general, and the Treat infinitly more magnificent.

Vainly excus'd by the pretence of reverence.

65. I know this fault (like many other) ſhrouds it ſelf under a fair diſguiſe, and this barbarous neglect pretends to the humbleſt veneration. People ſay 'tis their great reverence they have for the Sacrament that keeps them at ſo great a diſtance; but ſure that is but a fictitious reverence which diſcards Obedience; and when Chriſt commands our coming, our drawing back looks more like ſtubborneſs and rebellion, then aw and reſpect. I ſuppoſe we pretend not to exceed the Primitive Chriſtians in humility and godly fear; and yet they communicated daily, and therefore ſure our reverence is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce ſuch contrary effects. Indeed 'tis to be fear'd that many put a great cheat upon themſelves in this matter. The Euchariſt is juſtly accounted the higheſt of divine Ordinances, and thoſe who think of no preparation in other, yet have ſome general impreſſions of the neceſſity of it in this; but the uneaſineſs of the task diſcourages them, they dare not come without a wedding garment, and yet are loth to be at the pains to put it on: ſo that all this goodly pretext of reverence, is but the Devil in *Samuel*'s Mantle, is but ſloth clad in the habit of humility.

Or that at worſt 'tis only an omiſſion.

66. And to this temtation of ſloth, there is another thing very ſubſervient, and that is the eaſie and ſlight opinion which is commonly taken of ſins of Omiſſion. Many are ſtartled at great Commiſſions, think them to carry a face of deformity and horror, who in the mean time look on Omiſſions only as privations and meer nothings, as if all the affirmative Precepts were only things of form, put in by God rather to try our inclinations, then to oblige our performance; and ſo were rather overtures and propoſals which we may aſſent to or not, then injunctions which at our peril we muſt obey. A fancy no leſs abſurd then impious. That God ſhould be content ſo to compound with his creatures (and like a Prince overpower'd by his vaſſals) conſent to remit all their homage, abſolve them from all poſitive Duty, ſo they would be but ſo civil as not to flie in his face, or to commit outrage on his Perſon. But this wild ima-

gination needs no other confutation, then that form of Inditement our Savior gives us as the Model of that which ſhall be uſed at the laſt day, *Mat.* 25. where the whole Proceſs lies againſt ſins of Omiſſion, and yet the ſentence is as diſmal and irreverſible, as if all the Commiſſions in the World had bin put into the Bill.

This omiſſion has the complicated guilt of being an omiſſion and an unkindneſs.

67. And certainly of all Omiſſions none is like to be more ſeverely charged then this of communicating, which is not only a diſobedience, but an unkindneſs, which ſtrikes not only at the Authority but the Love of our Lord, when he ſo affects a union with us that he creates Myſteries only to effect it, when he deſcends even to our ſenſuality, and becauſe we want ſpiritual appetites, puts himſelf within reach of our natural, and as he once veil'd his Divinity in fleſh, ſo now veils even that fleſh under the form of our corporal nouriſhment, only that he may the more indiſſolvably unite, yea incorporate himſelf with us: When I ſay he do's all this, we are not only impious but inhuman if it will not attract us. Nay farther, when he do's all this upon the moſt endearing memory of what he has before done for us, when he preſents himſelf to our embraces in the ſame form wherein he preſented himſelf to God for our expiation, when he ſhews us thoſe wounds which our iniquities made, thoſe ſtripes by which we were healed, that death by which we are revived, ſhall we to compleat the Scene of his Paſſion, force him alſo to that pathetic complaint, *Lam.* 1. 12. *Have ye no regard all ye that paſs by?* Shall we inſtead of ſmiting our breaſts (as did other witneſſes of his ſufferings) turn our backs? If we can habitually do this, 'tis to be feared the next degree will be to wag our heads too, and we ſhall have the profaneſs to deride, what we have not the Piety to commemorate.

Coldneſs will naturally improve to lothing.

68. And this ſeems to be no improbable fear: for in Religion there are gradual declinations as well as advances: coldneſs and tepidity will (if not ſtopt in its progreſs) quickly grow to lothing and contemt. And indeed to what can we more reaſonably impute the great overflowings of profaneſs among us, then to our ill-husbanding the means of grace? Now certainly of all thoſe means there is none of greater energy and power then the bleſſed Sacrament.

Were there no other benefit then what the preparation implies, 'twere very conſiderable.

69. Were there no other benefit derived from it ſave that which the preparation implies, 'twere very conſiderable. It brings us to a recollection, fixes our indefinit purpoſes of ſearching and trying our waies, which elſe perhaps we ſhould infinitly defer, ſtops our career in ſin, and by acquainting us with our ſelves, ſhews us where our danger lies, and how we are to avert it, what breaches are made in upon our ſouls, and how we muſt repair them; all which are with many ſeldom thought of, but when the time of communicating approches. We live ſo far off from our ſelves, know ſo little what is done in us, that we anſwer the deſcription the Prophet makes of the ſurprize of *Babylon*, of which the King knew nothing till poſt after poſt run to inform him that his *City was taken at one end*, Jer. 51. 14. We often lie ſecure while the enemy is within our walls, and therefore they are friendly alarms which the Sacrament gives us to look to our defence. But if when the Trumpet ſounds none will prepare himſelf to the Battel, if when the Miniſter gives warning of a Sacrament, and the preparation it requires, we go our waies, and with *Gallio care for none of thoſe things*, or with *Felix*, Acts 24. 26. *put it off to a convenient time*; we wilfully expoſe our ſelves, and 'tis but juſt Chriſts dreadful menace ſhould be executed upon us, that we *die in our ſins*, who will fruſtrate ſuch an opportunity of a reſcu from them.

70. But

70. But 'tis not only this remoter and accidental advantage (this preventing Grace) which the Holy Eucharist affords; it contains yet greater and more intrinsic benefits, is a Spring of assisting Grace also: 'tis a Magazine of Spiritual Artillery to fortifie us against all assaults of the Devil, the great Catholicon for all the Maladies of our Souls, that which, if duly received, will qualifie us to make St. *Pauls* boast, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things thro Christ which strengthens me.* In a word, 'tis to us whatever we need, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, because it possesses us of him who is so, 1. *Cor.* 1. 31. So that whenever we neglect it, we manifestly betray our own interest, and do implicitly chuse death whilst we thus run from life. *But assisting grace and spiritual strength are confer'd.*

71. Thus we see there is a concurrence of all sorts of Arguments for this Duty; oh that some (at least) of them may prevail! If we are not tractable enough to do it in Obedience, yet let us be so ingenious as to do it for Love, for Gratitude; or if for neither of those, let us be at least so wise as to do it for Interest and Advantage. I know people are apt to pretend business; the Farm and the Oxen must excuse their coming to the Feast: but alas what business can there be of equal necessity or advantage with this? Yet even that Apology is superseded to those I now speak to, who as I observed before have leisure more then enough; so that it would be one part of the benefit, its taking up some of their time: let me therefore earnestly beseech them, not to grudg a few of their vacant hours to this so happy an emploiment. *There is a concurrence of all sorts of arguments for this duty.*

72. Did any of their near Friends and Relations invite them to an interview, they would not think him too importune, tho he repeated the summons weekly, nay daily, but would punctually observe the meeting: and when their Savior much seldomer entreats their company, shall he not obtain it? must he never see them but at two or three solemn times of the year? and shall they wonder at any intervening invitation (as the Shunamites husband did at her going to the Prophet when it was *neither new Moon nor Sabbath*, 2. *Kings* 4. 23.) and tell him 'tis not yet *Easter* or *Christmas*: this were not only to be irreligious, but rude; and methinks those who stand so much upon punctilios of Civility to one another, should not then only lay aside their good manners when they are to treat with their Redeemer. Certainly he is not so unpleasant company that they need shun his converse: if he do appear so to any, 'tis that shunning that is the cause of it. He do's not open his tresures to strangers: they that come now and then for form sake, no wonder if their entertainment be as cold as their address. They that would indeed *taste how sweet the Lord is*, *Psal.* 34. 8. must by the frequency of their coming shew the heartiness of it; and then they would indeed find it a *feast of fat things*, as the Prophet speaks. *We do not use to disappoint an invitation.*

73. In a word, let them but make experiment, resolve for a certain time (be it a year or thereabouts) to omit no opportunity, (and withall no due preparation) of communicating, I am a little confident they will afterwards need no other importunity but that of their own longings: the expiration of that definit time will prove the beginning of an indefinit, and their resolutions will have no other limit but their lives. For certainly there is not in all the whole mystery of Godliness, in all the Oeconomy of the Gospel, so expedite, so infallible a means of growth in Grace, as a frequent and worthy participation of this blessed Sacrament. I cannot therefore more pertinently close this Section, then with this exhortation to it, by which they will not only compleat *The use of the Sacrament would encrease the love and value of it.*

pleat all their Devotions, crown and hallow the reſt of their Oblations to God, but they will be advanced alſo in all parts of practical Piety. For tho this and other ſacred Offices be perform'd in the Church, the efficacy of them is not circumſcribed within thoſe walls, but follows the devout ſoul thro all the occurrences of human life.

The conviction of God's preſence in the Sanctuary, will fix an aw of it every where elſe.

74. She that has intently conſider'd the preſence of God in the Sanctuary, has learn'd ſo much of his Ubiquity, that ſhe will not eaſily forget it in other places; and ſhe that remembers that, will need no other guard to ſecure her innocence, no other incentive to animate her endeavors, ſince ſhe is view'd by him who is equally powerful to puniſh or reward, who regards not the perſons of the mighty, nor can be aw'd into the connivance of a crime. Indeed a ſerious advertence to the divine Preſence, is the moſt certain curb to all diſorderly appetites, as on the contrary the *not having God before their eies*, is in Scripture the comprehenſive deſcription of the moſt wretchleſs profligated ſtate of ſin. It concerns therefore all thoſe who aſpire to true Piety, to nuriſh that awful ſenſe in their hearts, as that which will beſt enable them to practice the Apoſtles advice, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *To cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, and to perfect holineſs in the fear of God.*

All excellencies in women that have not Piety are but jewels of Gold in a Swines ſnout.

75. I am ſenſible that this Section is ſpun out to a length very unproportionable to the former: but as the principal wheel in an artificial movement may be allowed a bulk ſomwhat anſwerable to its uſe, ſo upon the ſame account, the ſize of this is not unjuſtifiable, the Piety which this deſigns to recommend being the one neceſſary thing, which muſt influence all other endowments. We know the coarſe reſemblance *Solomon* makes of a *fair woman without diſcretion, that ſhe is like a jewel of gold in a ſwines ſnout*, *Prov.* 11. 12. but even that diſcretion (if any ſuch could be) without Piety were but the adding one jewel more, expoſing another valuable thing to the ſame deſpicable ridiculous uſe. But to ſpeak truly there is no real Diſcretion, where there is no Religion. And therefore *Solomon* ſeems in this place to underſtand by it that practical Wiſdom, which in the ſacred Dialect (his writings eſpecially) is equivalent to the fear of the Lord. 'Tis true, there may be a rallying wit to ſcoff and abuſe, a ſerpentine Wilineſs to undermine and deceive; but that ſort of Wiſdom (like that of *Achitophel*) finally converts into Fooliſhneſs, do's very often appear to do ſo in this life, but muſt certainly in the next, becauſe it builds upon a falſe bottom, prefers temporal things before eternal. And as neither Beauty nor Wit (the two celebrated accompliſhments of women) ſo will neither Greatneſs and Honor give any advantage without Piety: 'twill only (as hath bin already obſerv'd) make them more exemplary ſinners, inflame the account, and ſo expoſe them to a greater degree of condemnation. For ſure 'tis not their Sex that will reſcue them from the diſmal denunciation of the Wiſe man, *Wiſd.* 6. 6. *Mighty men ſhall be mightily tormented.* I conclude all with another irrefragable Maxim of the ſame Author, *Whether one be Rich, Noble, or Poor, their Glory is the Fear of the Lord.*

THE

THE Ladies Calling.

PART II. SECT. I.

Of Virgins.

1. WE have taken a view of thoſe general Qualifications, which are at once the Duty and the Ornament of the Female Sex conſider'd at large: Theſe, like the common Genus, involve all. But there are alſo ſpecific differences ariſing from the ſeveral circumſtances and ſtates of Life, ſome whereof may exact greater degrees even of the former Vertues, and all may have ſome diſtinct and peculiar Requiſits adapted to that particular ſtate and condition: and of theſe our propos'd method engages us now to conſider. Human life is full of viciſſitudes and changes, ſo that 'tis impoſſible to enumerate all the leſſer accidental alterations to which it is liable. But the principal and moſt diſtinct Scenes, in which a Woman can be ſuppos'd regularly to be an Actor, are theſe three, *Virginity*, *Marriage*, and *Widowhood:* which as they differ widely from each other, ſo for the diſcharging their reſpective Duties, there are peculiar cautions worthy to be adverted to.

There are beſides the general duties of Piety, particular ones referring to the ſeveral ſtates of life.

2. Virginity is firſt, in order of time, and if we will take Saint *Paul*'s judgment, in reſpect of excellence alſo, 1 *Cor.* 7. And indeed, ſhe that preſerves her ſelf in that ſtate upon the account he mentions, v. 33. that *ſhe may care for the things that are of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in Body and Spirit*, deſerves a great deal of Veneration, as making one of the neareſt approaches to the Angelical State. And accordingly, in the Primitive Times, ſuch a Virginity was had in a ſingular Eſtimation, and by the aſſignment of the School-men hath a particular Coronet of Glory belonging to it. Nay even among the Heathens, a conſecrated Virgin was lookt on as a thing moſt ſacred. The Roman Veſtals had extraordinary priviledges allowed them by the State: and they were generally held in ſuch Reverence, that Teſtaments and other Depoſitums of the greateſt Truſt were uſually committed to their Cuſtody, as to the ſureſt and moſt inviolable Sanctuary. Nay their preſence was ſo to convicted Malefactors; the Magiſtrates veiling their *faſces* when they appear'd, and giving up the Criminal to the commanding Interceſſion of Virgin Innocence.

Virginity is the firſt as in time, ſo alſo in excellency.

3. As for the Religious Orders of Virgins in the preſent Roman Church, tho ſome, and thoſe very great abuſes have crept in; yet I think 'twere to be wiſh'd, that thoſe who ſuppreſt them in this Nation, had confin'd themſelves within the bounds of a Reformation, by chooſing rather to rectifie and regulate, then aboliſh them.

'Twere to be wiſht that the abuſes of the Roman Church had bin reform'd, without an aboliti n.

One may be a Votaress tho not profest.

4. But tho there be not among us such Societies, yet there may be *Nuns* who are not Profest. She who has devoted her heart to God, and the better to secure his Interest against the most insinuating rival of Human Love, intends to admit none, and praies that she may not; do's by those humble purposes consecrate her self to God: and perhaps more acceptably, then if her presumtion should make her more positive, and engage her in a Vow she is not sure to perform.

The contemt under which Virginity is fall'n how to be avoided.

5. But this is a case do's not much need stating in our Clime, wherein Women are so little transported with this zeal of voluntary Virginity, that there are but few can find patience for it when necessary. An old Maid is now thought such a Curse as no Poetic Fury can exceed, look'd on as the most calamitous Creature in nature. And I so far yield to the opinion, as to confess it so to those who are kept in that state against their wills; but sure the original of that misery is from the desire, not the restraint of Marriage: let them but suppress that once, and the other will never be their Infelicity. But I must not be so unkind to the Sex, as to think 'tis alwaies such desire that gives them aversion to Celibacy; I doubt not many are frighted only with the vulgar contemt under which that state lies: for which if there be no cure, yet there is the same armor against this, which is against all other causeless Reproaches, *viz.* to contemn it. Yet I am a little apt to believe there may be a prevention in the case. If the superannuated Virgins would behave themselves with Gravity and Reservedness, addict themselves to the strictest Vertue and Piety, they would give the World some cause to believe, 'twas not their necessity, but their choice which kept them unmarried; that they were pre-engag'd to a better Amour, espous'd to the Spiritual Bridegroom: and this would give them among the soberer sort, at least the reverence and esteem of Matrons. Or if after all caution and endeavor, they chance to fall under the Tongues of malicious slanderers; this is no more then happens in all other Instances of Duty: and if contemt be to be avoided, Christianity it self must be quitted as well as Virgin Chastity. But if on the other side they endeavor to disguise their Age by all the impostures and gaieties of a youthful dress and behavior, if they still herd themselves among the youngest and vainest company, betray a young Mind in an aged Body; this must certainly expose them to scorn and censure. If no Play, no Ball or Dancing-meeting can escape them, people will undoubtedly conclude that they desire to put off themselves, to meet with Chapmen, who so constantly keep the Fairs. I wish therefore they would more universally try the former expedients which I am confident is the best Amulet against the reproch they so much dread, and may also deliver them from the danger of a more costly remedy; I mean that of an unequal and imprudent Match, which many have rush'd upon as they have ran frighted from the other, and so by an unhappy contradiction, do both stay long and marry hastily, gall their necks to spare their ears, and run into the Yoke rather then hear so slight and unreasonable a Reproch. They need not, I think, be upbraided with the folly of such an Election, since their own Experience is (to many of them) but too severe a Monitor. I shall not insist further on this, but having given the elder Virgins that Ensign of their Seniority as to stand first in my Discourse, I shall now address more generally to the rest.

The modesty of Virgins.

6. And here the two grand Elements essential to the Virgin state, are Modesty and Obedience, which tho necessary to all, yet are in a more eminent degree requir'd here. And therefore, tho I have spoken largely of the

the vertue of Modeſty in the firſt part of this Tract, yet it will not be impertinent to make ſome further reflections on it, by way of application to Virgins, in whom Modeſty ſhould appear in its higheſt elevation, and ſhould come up to Shamefac'dneſs. Her look, her ſpeech, her whole behavior ſhould own an humble diſtruſt of her ſelf; ſhe is to look on her ſelf but as a Novice, a Probationer in the World, and muſt take this time rather to learn and obſerve, then to dictate and preſcribe. Indeed there is ſcarce any thing looks more indecent, then to ſee a young Maid too forward and confident in her talk. 'Tis the Opinion of the Wiſe-man, *Eccleſ.* 32. 8. that *a young man ſhould ſcarce ſpeak, tho twice ask'd:* in proportion to which, 'twill ſure not become a young Woman, whoſe Sex puts her under greater reſtraints, to be either importunate or magiſterial in her diſcourſe. And tho that which former Ages call'd Boldneſs, is now only Aſſurance and good Breeding, yet we have ſeen ſuch bad ſuperſtructures upon that Foundation, as ſure will not much recommend it to any conſidering Perſon.

7. But there is another breach of Modeſty, as it relates to Chaſtity, in which they are yet more eſpecially concern'd. The very name of Virgin imports a moſt critical niceneſs in that point. Every indecent curioſity, or impure fancy, is a deflowring of the mind, and every the leaſt corruption of them gives ſome degrees of defilement to the Body too. For between the ſtate of pure immaculate Virginity and arrant Proſtitution, there are many intermedial ſteps; and ſhe that makes any of them, is ſo far departed from her firſt Integrity. She that liſtens to any wanton Diſcourſe has violated her ears, ſhe that ſpeaks any, her tongue; every immodeſt glance vitiates her eye, and every the lighteſt act of dalliance leaves ſomthing of ſtain and ſullage behind it. There is therefore a moſt rigorous caution requiſit herein: for as nothing is more clean and white then a perfect Virginity, ſo every the leaſt ſpot or ſoil is the more diſcernable. Beſides, Youth is for the moſt part flexible, and eaſily warps into a crookedneſs, and therefore can never ſet it ſelf too far from a temtation. Our tender bloſſoms we are fain to skreen and ſhelter, becauſe every unkindly air nips and deſtroies them: and nothing can be more nice and delicate then a Maiden Vertue, which ought not to be expos'd to any of thoſe malignant airs which may blaſt and corrupt it, of which God knows there are too many, ſome that blow from within, and others from without.

Nothing is more nice and delicate then a Maiden vertue.

8. Of the firſt ſort, there is none more miſchievous then Curioſity, a temtation which foil'd human Nature even in Paradiſe: and therefore ſure a feeble Girl ought not to truſt her ſelf with that which ſubdued her better fortified Parent. The truth is, an affected Ignorance cannot be ſo blamable in other caſes as it is commendable in this. Indeed it is the ſureſt and moſt invincible Guard; for ſhe who is curious to know Indecent things, 'tis odds but ſhe will too ſoon and too dearly buy the learning. The ſuppreſſing and deteſting all ſuch Curioſities, is therefore that eminent fundamental piece of Continence I would recommend to them, as that which will protect and ſecure all the reſt.

'Tis endanger'd by Curioſity.

9. But when they have ſet this guard upon themſelves, they muſt provide againſt Foreign aſſaults too; the moſt dangerous whereof I take to be ill Company and Idleneſs. Againſt the firſt they muſt provide by a prudent choice of Converſation, which ſhould generally be of their own Sex; yet not all of that neither, but ſuch who will at leaſt entertain them innocently if not profitably. Againſt the ſecond they may ſecure themſelves

By ill Company and Idleneſs.

ſelves by a conſtant ſeries of Emploiments: I mean not ſuch frivolous ones as are more idle then doing nothing, but ſuch as are ingenious, and ſome way worth their time: wherein as the firſt is to be given to the offices of Piety, ſo in the Intervals of thoſe, there are divers others, by which they may not unuſefully fill up the vacancies of their time: ſuch are the acquiring of any of thoſe ornamental improvements which become their Quality, as Writing, Needle-works, Languages, Muſic, or the like. If I ſhould here inſert the art of Oeconomy and Houſhold Managery, I ſhould not think I affronted them in it; that being the moſt proper Feminine buſineſs, from which neither wealth nor greatneſs can totally abſolve them: and a little of the Theory in their Parents houſe, would much aſſiſt them towards the Practic when they come to their own. In a word, there are many parts of knowledg uſeful for Civil as well as Divine Life; and the improving themſelves in any of thoſe, is a rational Emploiment.

By gaming. 10. But I confeſs I know not how to reduce to that Head many of thoſe things which from divertiſements, are now ſtept up to be the ſolemn buſineſs of many young Ladies, (and I doubt of ſome old.) Such is in the firſt place Gaming, a recreation whoſe lawfulneſs I queſtion not, whilſt it keeps within the bounds of a recreation: but when it ſets up for a Calling, I know not whence it derives its licenſe. And a Calling ſure it ſeems to be with ſome; a laborious one too, ſuch as they toil night and day at, nay do not allow themſelves that remiſſion which the Laws both of God and Man have provided for the meaneſt Mechanic: the Sabbath is to them no day of reſt, but this Trade go's on when all Shops are ſhut. I know not how they ſatisfie themſelves in ſuch an habitual waſt of their time, (beſides all the incidental faults of Avarice and anger,) but I much doubt that Plea, whatſoever it is which paſſes with them, will ſcarce hold weight at his Tribunal, who has commanded us to *redeem*, not fling away *our time*.

By reading Romances. 11. There is another thing to which ſome devote a very conſiderable part of their time, and that is the reading Romances, which ſeems now to be thought the peculiar and only becoming ſtudy of young Ladies. I confeſs their Youth may a little adapt it to them when they were Children, and I wiſh they were always in their event as harmleſs; but I fear they often leave ill impreſſions behind them. Thoſe amorous Paſſions, which 'tis their deſign to paint to the utmoſt Life, are apt to inſinuate themſelves into their unwary Readers, and by an unhappy inverſion a Copy ſhall produce an Original. When a poor young Creature ſhall read there of ſome triumphant Beauty, that has I know not how many captiv'd Knights proſtrate at her feet, ſhe will probably be temted to think it a fine thing: and may reflect how much ſhe loſes time, that has not yet ſubdu'd one heart: and then her buſineſs will be to ſpread her nets, lay her toils to catch ſome body who will more fatally enſnare her. And when ſhe has once wound her ſelf into an Amour, thoſe Authors are ſubtil Caſuiſts for all difficult caſes that may occur in it, will inſtruct in the neceſſary Artifices of deluding Parents and Friends, and put her ruin perfectly in her own power. And truly this ſeems to be ſo natural a conſequent of this ſort of ſtudy, that of all the divertiſements that look ſo innocently, they can ſcarce fall upon any more hazardous. Indeed, 'tis very difficult to imagine what vaſt miſchief is done to the World, by the falſe notions and images of things; particularly of Love and Honor, thoſe nobleſt concerns of human Life, repreſent-

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ed in theſe Mirrors. But when we conſider upon what principles the Duelliſts and Hectors of the Age defend their Outrages, and how great a Devotion is paid to Luſt, inſtead of virtuous Love, we cannot be to ſeek for the Goſpel which makes theſe Doctrines appear Orthodox.

12. As for the entertainments which they find abroad, they may be innocent, or otherwiſe, according as they are managed. The common entercourſe of Civility is a debt to Humanity, and therefore mutual Viſits may often be neceſſary, and ſo (in ſome degree) may be ſeveral harmleſs and healthful recreations which may call them abroad, for I write not now to Nuns, and have no purpoſe to confine them to a Cloiſter. Yet on the other ſide to be always wandring, is the condition of a Vagabond; and of the two, 'tis better to be a Priſoner to ones home then a ſtranger. *Solomon* links it with ſome very unlaudable qualities of a Woman, *Prov.* 7.11. that *her feet abide not in her houſe*; and 'tis an unhappy impotence not to be able to ſtay at home, when there is any thing to be ſeen abroad: that any Mask, or Revel, any Jollity of others muſt be their rack and torment, if they can not get to it. Alas ſuch meetings are not ſo ſure to be ſafe, that they had need be frequent, and they are of all others leaſt like to be ſafe to thoſe, who much dote on them. And therefore thoſe that find they do ſo, had need to counterbiaſs their minds, and ſet them to ſomthing better, and by more ſerious entertainments ſupplant thoſe vanities, which at the beſt are childiſh, and may often prove worſe; it being too probable that thoſe *Dinah*'s which are ſtill gadding, tho on pretence to ſee only the daughters of the Land, *Gen.* 34. may at laſt meet with a ſon of *Hamor*. *By viſits.*

13. There is alſo another great devourer of time ſubſervient to the former, I mean Dreſſing: for they that love to be ſeen much abroad, will be ſure be ſeen in the moſt exact Form. And this is an emploiment that do's not ſteal but challenge their time; what they waſt here is *cum Privilegio*, it being by the verdict of this age the proper buſineſs, the one ſcience wherein a young Lady is to be perfectly verſt: ſo that now all vertuous emulation is converted into this ſingle Ambition, who ſhall excel in this Faculty. A vanity which I confeſs is more excuſable in the youngeſt then the elder ſort; they being ſuppoſable not yet to have outworn the reliques of their Childhood, to which toies and gaiety were proportionable. Beſides, 'tis ſure allowable upon a ſoberer account, that they who deſign Marriage ſhould give themſelves the advantage of decent Ornaments, and not by the negligent rudeneſs of their Dreſs belie Nature, and render themſelves leſs amiable then ſhe has made them. But all this being granted, 'twill by no means juſtifie that exceſſive curioſity and ſolicitude, that expence of time and mony too which is now uſed. A very moderate degree of all thoſe will ſerve for that ordinary decency which they need provide for, will keep them from the reproach of an affected Singularity, which is as much as a ſober Perſon need take care for. And I muſt take leave to ſay, that in order to Marriage, ſuch a moderation is much likelier to ſucceed then the contrary extravagance. Among the prudenter ſort of Men I am ſure it is, if it be not among the looſe and vain, againſt which twill be their guard, and ſo do them the greater ſervice. For certainly, he that chooſes a wife for thoſe qualities for which a wiſe man would refuſe her, underſtands ſo little what Marriage is, as portends no great felicity to her that ſhall have him. But if they deſire to marry Men of ſobriety and diſcretion, they are obliged in juſtice to bring the ſame qualities they expect, which will be very ill evidenced by *By dreſſing.*

that exceſs and vanity we now ſpeak of.

This ſetting themſelves out, of young Ladies, which they deſign for their preferment, is a great hindrance of it.

14. For to ſpeak a plain (tho perhaps ungrateful) truth, this (together with ſome of the modiſh liberties now in uſe) is it, which keeps ſo many young Ladies about the Town unmarried, 'till they loſe the Epithet of young. Sober Men are afraid to venture upon a humor ſo diſagreeing to their own, leſt whilſt (according to the primitive reaſon of Marriage) they ſeek a help, they eſpouſe a ruin. But this is eſpecially dreadful to a plain Country Gentlemen, who looks upon one of theſe fine Women as a Gaudy Idol, to whom if he once become a Votary, he muſt ſacrifice a great part of his Fortune, and all his Content. How reaſonable that apprehenſion is, the many wracks of conſiderable Families do too evidently atteſt. But I preſume ſome of the nicer Ladies have ſuch a contemt of any thing that they pleaſe to call Ruſtic, that they will not much regret the averting of thoſe whom they ſo deſpiſe. They will not, perhaps, while they are in purſuit or hopes of others; but when thoſe fail, theſe will be look'd on as a welcome Reſerve: and therefore 'twill be no Prudence to cut themſelves off from that laſt reſort, leſt they (as many have done) betake themſelves to much worſe. For as in many inſtances 'tis the Country which feeds and maintains the grandeur of the Town, ſo of all commerces there, Marriage would ſooneſt fail, if all Rural ſupplies were cut off.

The adorning of the mind were a more laudable endeavor.

15. But I have perſued this ſpeculation farther then perhaps my Virgin Readers will thank me for: I ſhall return to that which it was brought to inforce, and beſeech them, that if not to Men, yet to approve themſelves to God, they will confine themſelves in the matter of their Dreſs within the due limits of Decency and Sobriety. I ſhall not direct them to thoſe ſtrict Rules which *Tertullian* and ſome other of the ancient Fathers have preſcrib'd in this matter; my Petition is only, That our Virgins would at leaſt ſo take care of their Bodies, as Perſons that alſo have a Soul: which if they can be perſwaded to, they may reſerve much of their time for more worthy uſes then thoſe of the Comb, the Tuillets, and the Glaſs. And truly, 'tis not a little their concern to do ſo, for this Spring of their age is that Critical Inſtant that muſt either confirm or blaſt the hopes of all the ſucceeding Seaſons. The minds of young People are uſually compared to a blank ſheet of Paper, equally capable of the beſt or the worſt Impreſſions: 'tis pitty they ſhould be fill'd with childiſh Scrawls and little inſignificant Figures, but 'tis ſhame and horror they ſhould be ſtain'd with any vicious Characters, any blots of Impurity or Diſhonor. To prevent which, let the ſevereſt notions of Modeſty and Honor be early and deeply impreſt upon their Souls, graven as with the point of a Diamond, that they may be as indelible as they are indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the Virgin ſtate.

The Obedience of Virgins.

16. There is alſo another very requiſite Quality, and that is Obedience. The younger ſort of Virgins are ſuppoſed to have Parents, or if any has bin ſo unhappy as to looſe them early, they commonly are left in the charge of ſome Friend or Guardian, that is to ſupply the place: ſo they cannot be to ſeek to whom this Obedience is to be paid. And it is not more their Duty then their Intereſt to pay it. Youth is apt to be fooliſh in its Deſigns, and heady in the purſuit of them; and there can be nothing more deplorable then to have it left to its ſelf. And therefore God, who permits not even the Brutes to deſtitute their young ones till they attain to the perfection of their Kind, has put Children under the guidance and protection of their Parents, 'till by the maturing of their

their Judgments they are qualified to be their own Conductors. Now this Obedience (as that which is due to all other Superiors) is to extend it ſelf to all things that are either good or indifferent, and has no clauſe of exception, but only where the Command is unlawful. And in ſo wide a ſcene of Action, there will occur ſo many particular occaſions of ſubmiſſion, that they had need have a great reverence of their Parents judgments, and diſtruſt of their own. And if it ſhould happen that ſome Parents are not qualified to give them the former, yet the general imbecillity of their age, will remain a conſtant ground of the latter: ſo that they may ſafelier venture themſelves to their Parents miſguidance then their own, by how much the errors of Humility and Obedience, are leſs malignant then thoſe of Preſumtion and Arrogance.

17. But this is a Doctrine which will ſcarce paſs for Orthodox with many of the young Women of our daies, with whom 'tis prejudice enough againſt the prudenteſt advice, that it comes from their Parents. 'Tis the grand Ingenuity of theſe Times to turn every thing into Ridicule; and if a Girl can but rally ſmartly upon the ſober admonition of a Parent, ſhe concludes ſhe is the abler Perſon, takes her ſelf for a Wit, and the other for a Fop; (a Bugbear word, deviſed to fright all ſeriouſneſs and ſobriety out of the World) and learns not only to diſobey, but to contemn. Indeed the great confidence that Youth now ſeems to have of its ſelf, as it is very indecent, ſo it is extremely pernicious. Children that will attemt to go alone before their time, oft get dangerous falls: and when thoſe who are but little removed from Children, ſhall caſt off the wiſer conduct of others, they oft ſadly miſcarry by their own.

There is among youth a moſt miſchievous inſolence to contemn advice becauſe it comes from a Parent.

18. I Know this Age has ſo great a contemt of the former, that 'tis but matter of ſcorn to alledg any of their Cuſtoms, elſe I ſhould ſay that the liberties that are taken now, would then have been ſtartled at. They that ſhould then have ſeen a young Maid rambling abroad without her Mother, or ſome other prudent Perſon, would have look'd on her as a ſtray, and thought it but a neighborly office to have brought her home: whereas now 'tis a rarity to ſee them in any company graver then themſelves, and ſhe that go's with her Parent (unleſs it be ſuch a Parent as is as wild as her ſelf) thinks ſhe do's but walk abroad with her Jailor. But ſure there are no ſmall miſchiefs that attend this liberty; for it leaves them perfectly to the choice of their company, a thing of too weighty an importance for giddy heads to determin: who will be ſure to elect ſuch as are of their own humor, with whom they may keep up a traffick of little Impertinencies and trifling Entertainments; and ſo by conſequence, condemn themſelves never to grow wiſer, which they might do by an Ingenious Converſation. Nay 'tis well if that negative ill be the worſt, for it gives opportunity to any that have ill deſigns upon them. It will be eaſie getting into their company, who have no guard to keep any body out, and as eaſie by little compliances and flatteries to inſinuate into their good Graces, who have not the ſagacity to diſcern to what inſidious purpoſes thoſe blandiſhments are directed: and when they once begin to nibble at that Bait, to be pleaſed with the Courtſhip, 'tis great odds they do not eſcape the Hook.

So alſo to avoid their company.

19. Alas, how many poor innocent Creatures have been thus indiſcernibly enſnared; have at firſt perhaps only liked the Wit and Raillery, perhaps the Language and Addreſs, then the Freedom and good Humor; till at laſt they come to like the Perſon. It is therefore a moſt neceſſary caution

Young women having no guard about them, are frequently enſnar'd.

caution for young Women, not to truſt too much to their own conduct, but to own their dependance on thoſe, to whom God and Nature has ſubjected them, and to look on it not as their reſtraint and burden, but as their ſhelter and protection. For where once the authority of a Parent comes to be deſpis'd, tho in the lighteſt inſtance, it laies the foundation of utmoſt Diſobedience. She that will not be preſcrib'd to in the choice of her ordinary diverting company, will leſs be ſo in chooſing the fixt Companion of her Life: and we find it often eventually true, That thoſe who govern themſelves in the former, will not be govern'd by their Friends in the latter, but by pre-engagements of their own, prevent their elections for them.

A ſelf-diſpoſal is the higheſt injury a child can do a Parent.

20. And this is one of the higheſt Injuries they can do their Parents, who have ſuch a native Right in them, that 'tis no leſs an Injuſtice then Diſobedience to diſpoſe of themſelves without them. This right of the Parent is ſo undoubted, that we find God himſelf gives way to it, and will not ſuffer the moſt Holy pretence, no not that of a Vow, to invade it, as we may ſee his own ſtating of the Caſe, *Numb.* 30. How will he then reſent it, to have this ſo indiſpenſable a Law violated upon the impulſe of an impotent Paſſion, an amorous Inclination? Nor is the folly leſs then the ſin: they injure and afflict their Parents, but they generally ruin and undo themſelves; and that upon a double account. Firſt, as to the ſecular part: thoſe that are ſo raſh as to make ſuch Matches, cannot be imagined ſo provident as to examine how agreeable 'tis to their Intereſt, or to contrive for any thing beyond the Marriage. The thoughts of their future temporal Conditions (like thoſe of the Eternal) can find no room amidſt their fooliſh Raptures, but as if Love were indeed that Deity which the Poets feigned it, they depend on it for all, and take no farther care. And event do's commonly too ſoon inſtruct them in the deceitfulneſs of that Truſt; Love being ſo unable to ſupport them that it cannot maintain its ſelf, but quickly expires when it has brought the Lovers into thoſe ſtraits from whence it cannot reſcue them. So that indeed it do's but play the Decoy with them, brings them into the nooſe, and then retires. For when ſecular Wants begin to pinch them, all the Tranſports of their Kindneſs do uſually convert into mutual Accuſations, for having made each other miſerable.

Is generally unfortunate.

21. And indeed there is no reaſon to expect any better event, becauſe in the ſecond place they forfeit their title to the Divine Bleſſing. Nay they put themſelves out of the capacity to ask it, it being a ridiculous Impudence to beg God to proſper the tranſgreſſions of his Law. Such Weddings ſeem to invoke only ſome of the Poetic Romantic Deities, *Venus* and *Hymen*, from whence they derive a happineſs as fictitious as are the Gods that are to ſend it. Let all Virgins therefore religiouſly obſerve this part of Obedience to their Parents, that they may not only have their Benediction but Gods. And to that purpoſe let this be laid as a Fundamental Rule, That they never hearken to any propoſal of Marriage made them from any other hand; but when any ſuch Overture is made, divert the addreſs from her ſelf and direct it to her Parents, which will be the beſt teſt imaginable for any Pretender. For if he know himſelf worthy of her, he will not fear to avow his deſign to them; and therefore if he decline that, 'tis a certain Symtom, he is conſcious of ſomthing that he knows will not give a valuable conſideration: ſo that this courſe will repel no Suitor but ſuch as it is their Intereſt not to admit. Beſides, 'tis moſt agreeable to the Virgin Modeſty, which ſhould make Marriage an act rather of their obedience then their choice; and they that think their

Friends

Friends too ſlow pac'd in the matter, and ſeek to out-run them, give cauſe to ſuſpect they are ſpurr'd on by ſomwhat too warm deſires.

22. But as a Daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the will of her Parent, ſo (to hang the ballance even) I muſt ſay ſhe is not oblig'd to force her own, by marrying where ſhe cannot love; for a negative voice in the caſe is ſure as much the Childs right as the Parents. 'Tis true, ſhe ought well to examin the grounds of her averſion, and if they prove only childiſh and fanciful, ſhould endeavor to correct them by reaſon and ſober conſideration: but if after all ſhe cannot leave to hate, I think ſhe ſhould not proceed to Marry. I confeſs I ſee not how ſhe can, without a Sacrilegious Hypocriſie, vow ſo ſolemnly to love, where ſhe at the inſtant actually abhors: and where the married ſtate is begun with ſuch a Perjury, 'tis no wonder to find it continued on at the ſame rate, that other parts of the Vow be alſo violated, and that ſhe obſerve the Negative part no more then the Poſitive, and as little forſake others, as ſhe do's heartily cleave to her Husband. I fear this is a conſequence whereof there are too many ſad Inſtances now extant. For tho doubtleſs there are ſome Vertues which will hold out againſt all the temtations their averſions can give, nay which do at laſt even conquer thoſe averſions, and render their duty as eaſie as they have kept it ſafe: yet we find there are but ſome that do ſo, that it is no inſeparable property of the Sex, and therefore it is ſure too hazardous an Experiment for any of them to venture on.

How far a Virgin may interpoſe her diſſent.

23. And if they may not upon the more generous motive of Obedience, much leſs may they upon the worſe inducements of Avarice and Ambition. For a Woman to make a Vow to the Man, and yet intend only to marry his Fortune, or his Title, is the baſeſt inſincerity, and ſuch as in any other kind of civil Contracts would not only have the infamy but the puniſhment of a Cheat. Nor will it at all ſecure them, that in this 'tis only liable to Gods Tribunal; for that is not like to make the doom leſs but more heavy, it being, as the Apoſtle witneſſes, *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, *Heb.* 10. 31. In a word, Marriage is Gods Ordinance, and ſhould be conſider'd as ſuch, not made a ſtale to any unworthy deſign. And it may well be preſum'd one cauſe why ſo few Matches are happy, that they are not built upon a right Foundation. Some are grounded upon Wealth, ſome on Beauty, too ſandy bottoms God knows to raiſe any laſting Felicity on: whilſt in the interim, Vertue and Piety, the only ſolid Baſis for that Superſtructure, are ſcarce ever conſider'd. Thus God is commonly left out of the conſultation. The Lawyers are reſorted to to ſecure the Settlements, all ſorts of Artificers to make up the Equipage, but he is neither adviſ'd with as to the Motives, nor ſcarce ſupplicated as to the event of Wedding. Indeed 'tis a deplorable ſight to ſee with what lightneſs and unconcernedneſs young People go to that weightieſt action of their Lives; that a Marriage-day is but a kind of Bacchanal, a more licens'd avow'd Revel; when if they duly conſider it, 'tis the hinge upon which their future Life moves, which turns them over to a happy or miſerable Being, and therefore ought to be enter'd upon with the greateſt Seriouſneſs and Devotion. Our Church adviſes excellently in the Preface to Matrimony; and I wiſh they would not only give it the hearing at the time, but make it their ſtudy a good while before: yea and the Marriage Vow too, which is ſo ſtrict and awful a Bond, that methinks they had need well weigh every Branch of it ere they enter it, and by the ferventeſt Praiers implore that God, who is the Witneſs, to be their Aſſiſtant too in its performance.

The injuſtice of marrying for Fortune.

SECT. II.

Of Wives.

The ſingle relation of a Wife draws in many others.

1. AND now having conducted the Virgin to the entrance of another State, I muſt ſhift the Scene, and attend her thither alſo. And here ſhe is lanch'd into a wide Sea, that one relation of a Wife drawing after it many others. For as ſhe Eſpouſes the Man, ſo ſhe do's his Obligations alſo: and whereever he by ties of Nature or Alliance ow's a Reverence or Kindneſs, ſhe is no leſs a Debtor. Her Marriage is an adoption into his Family; and therefore ſhe is to pay to every Branch of it, what their Stations there do reſpectively require: to define which more particularly, would be a work of more length then profit. I ſhall therefore confine the preſent Conſideration to the relation ſhe ſtands in to her Husband, and (what is uſually concomitant with that) her Children, and her Servants; and ſo ſhall conſider her in the three capacities, of a Wife, a Mother, and a Miſtreſs.

The marriage debt to the perſon of a Husband.

2. In that of a Wife, her duty has ſeveral Aſpects, as it relates, firſt to his Perſon, ſecondly to his Reputation, thirdly to his Fortune. The firſt debt to his Perſon is Love, which we find ſet as the prime Article in the Marriage-Vow. And indeed that is the moſt Eſſential requiſite: without this, 'tis only a Bargain and Compact, a Tyranny perhaps on the Mans part, and a Slavery on the Womans. 'Tis Love only that cements the Hearts, and where that Union is wanting, 'tis but a ſhadow, a Carcaſs of Marriage. Therefore as it is very neceſſary to bring ſome degree of that to this State; ſo 'tis no leſs to maintain and improve it in it. This is it which facilitates all other duties of Marriage; makes the Yoke ſit ſo lightly, that it rather pleaſes then galls. It ſhould therefore be the ſtudy of Wives to preſerve this Flame, that like the Veſtal Fire it may never go out; and to that end carefully to guard it from all thoſe things which are naturally apt to extinguiſh it: of which kind are all frowardneſs and little perverſneſs of humor, all ſullen and moroſe behavior; which by taking off from the delight and complacency of Converſation, will by degrees wear off the kindneſs.

Of avoiding Jealouſy.

3. But of all, I know nothing more dangerous then that unhappy Paſſion of Jealouſie; which tho 'tis ſaid to be the Child of Love, yet, like the Viper, its Birth is the certain deſtruction of the Parent. As therefore they muſt be nicely careful to give their Husbands no color, no leaſt umbrage for it; ſo ſhould they be as reſolute to reſiſt all that occurs to themſelves: be ſo far from that buſie Curioſity, that induſtry to find cauſes of ſuſpicion; that even where they preſented themſelves they ſhould avert the conſideration, put the moſt candid conſtruction upon any doubtful action. And indeed, Charity in this inſtance has not more of the Dove then of the Serpent. It is infinitly the wiſeſt courſe, both in relation to her preſent quiet, and her future innocence. The entertaining a jealous fancy, is the admitting the moſt trecherous the moſt diſturbing inmate in the world; and ſhe opens her breaſt to a Fury that lets it in. 'Tis certainly one of the moſt enchanting frenzies imaginable, keeps her alwaies in a moſt reſtleſs importunate ſearch after that which ſhe dreads and abhors to find, and makes her equally miſerable when ſhe is injur'd, and when ſhe is not.

4. And

4. And as ſhe totally loſes her Eaſe, ſo 'tis odds but ſhe will part alſo with ſome degrees of her Innocence. Jealouſy is commonly attended with a black train: it muſters all the forces of our iraſcible part to abet its quarrel, Wrath and Anger, Malice and Revenge: and by how much the female impotence to govern thoſe paſſions is the greater, ſo much the more dangerous is it to admit that which will ſo ſurely ſet them in an uprore. For if *Jealouſy* be, as the Wiſe Man ſaies, *the rage of a man*, *Prov.* 6. 32. we may well think it may be the Fury, the Madneſs of a woman. And indeed all ages have given tragical inſtances of it, not only in the moſt indecent fierceneſs and clamor, but in the ſolemn miſchiefs of actual Revenges. Nay 'tis to be doubted there have bin ſome whoſe malice has rebounded; who have ruin'd themſelves in ſpight, have bin adulterous by way of retaliation, and taken more ſcandalous liberties then thoſe they complain'd of in their Husbands. And when ſuch enormous effects as theſe are the iſſues of jealouſy, it ought to keep women on the ſtricteſt guard againſt it. *The miſchievous conſequents of it.*

5. But perhaps it may be ſaid that ſome are not left to their Jealouſy and conjectures, but have more demonſtrative proofs. In this age 'tis indeed no ſtrange thing for men to publiſh their ſin as *Sodom*, and the offender do's ſomtimes not diſcover but boaſt his Crime. In this caſe I confeſs 'twill be ſcarce poſſible to disbelieve him: but even here a wife has this advantage, that ſhe is out of the pain of Suſpence. She knows the utmoſt, and therefore is now at leſure to convert all that induſtry which ſhe would have uſed for the diſcovery, to fortify her ſelf againſt a known Calamity; which ſure ſhe may as well do in this as in any other; a patient Submiſſion being the one Catholicon in all diſtreſſes; and as the ſlighteſt can overwhelm us if we add our own impatience towards our ſinking, ſo the greateſt cannot if we deny it that aid. They are therefore far in the wrong, who, in caſe of this injury, purſue their husbands with virulencies and reproches. This is, as *Solomon* ſaies *Prov.* 25. 20. *The pouring vineger upon niter*, applying corroſives when balſoms are moſt needed; whereby they not only encreaſe their own ſmart, but render the wound incurable. They are not thunders and earthquakes, but ſoft gentle rains that cloſe the ſciſſures of the ground; and the breaches of Wedlock will never be cemented by ſtorms and loud outcries. Many men have bin made worſe, but ſcarce ever any better by it: for guilt covets nothing more then an opportunity of recriminating; and where the husband can accuſe the wives Bitterneſs, he thinks he needs no other apology for his own Luſt. *What to be don in caſe of manifeſt falſeneſs.*

6. A wiſe Diſſimulation, or very calm notice is ſure the likelieſt means of reclaiming: for where men have not wholly put off Humanity, there is a native compaſſion to a meek ſufferer. We have naturally ſome regret to ſee a Lamb under the knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a Swine diverts our pity; ſo that Patience in this caſe is as much the intereſt as duty of a Wife. *The advantage of Patience.*

7. But there is another inſtance wherein that vertue has a yet ſeverer trial, and that is when a Wife lies under the cauſleſs jealouſies of the husband, (I ſay cauſeleſs, for if they be juſt 'tis not ſo much a ſeaſon for Patience, as for Repentance and reformation.) This is ſure one of the greateſt Calamities that can befal a vertuous woman; who as ſhe accounts nothing ſo dear as her loialty and honor, ſo thinks no infelicity can equal the aſperſing of thoſe, eſpecially when it is from him, to whom ſhe has bin the moſt ſolicitous to approve her ſelf. Yet God, who permits nothing but what he directs to ſome wiſe and gracious end, has an over- *Of cauſeleſs jealouſy towards the Wife, by the Husband.*

ruling hand in this as well as in all other events of life; and therefore it becomes every woman in that condition, to examin ſtrictly what ſhe has done to provoke ſo ſevere a ſcourge. For tho her heart condemn her not of any Falſeneſs to her husband, yet probably it may of many Diſloialties to her God; and then ſhe is humbly to accept even of this traducing of her Innocence, as the puniſhment of her iniquity, and bear it with the ſame temper wherewith *David* did the unjuſt revilings of *Shimei*, 2 *Kings* 16. 10. *Let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

The comfort of a reſort to God's righteous judgment.

8. And when ſhe hath made this penitent reflection on her real guilts, ſhe may then with more courage encounter thoſe imaginary ones which are charg'd on her: wherein ſhe is to uſe all prudent and regular means for her juſtification, that being a debt ſhe ows to truth, and her own fame. But if after all the ſuſpicion remains ſtill fix'd (as commonly thoſe which are the moſt unreaſonable are the moſt obſtinate;) ſhe may ſtill ſolace her ſelf in her Integrity, and Gods approbation of it: nor ought ſhe to think her ſelf deſolate, that has her appeal open to heaven. Therefore whilſt ſhe can look both inward and upward with comfort, why ſhould ſhe chooſe to fix her eies only on the object of her grief? and whilſt her own complaint is of defamation, why ſhould ſhe ſo diſhonor God and a good Conſcience, as to ſhew any thing can be more forcible to oppreſs, then they are to relieve and ſupport? And if ſhe may not indulge to Grief, much leſs may ſhe to Anger, and Bitterneſs.

The torment of Jealouſy is a ſevere revenge on the injurious huſband.

9. Indeed if ſhe conſider how painful a paſſion Jealouſy is, her husband will more need her pity; who tho he be unjuſt to her, is yet cruel to himſelf. And as we do not uſe to hate and malign thoſe Lunatics, who in their fits beat their friends, and cut and gaſh themſelves, but rather make it our care to put all harmful engines out of their way; ſo ſhould the wife not deſpitefully ruminate upon the injury, but wiſely contrive to avert his temtations no more, by denying her ſelf even the moſt innocent liberties, if ſhe ſee they diſſatisfy him. I know there have bin ſome of another opinion; and as if they thought Jealouſy were to be cured by majoration, have in an angry contemt done things to inflame it, put on an unwonted freedom and jollity, to ſhew their husbands how little they had ſecur'd themſelves by their diſtruſt. But this as it is no Chriſtian, ſo I conceive it is no prudent expedient: it ſerves to ſtrengthen not only the husbands ſuſpicion, but his party too, and make many others of his mind: and 'tis a little to be fear'd, that by uſing ſo to brave the Jealouſy, they may at laſt come to verify it. I have bin the longer on this theme, becauſe as Jealouſy is the moſt fatal peſt of a married life, ſo I think it more ordinarily occurs among people of Quality, and with the worſt and moſt durable effects. Yet what ever pretences people may take hence, the marriage vow is too faſt a knot to be looſned by fancies and Chimera's: let a woman therefore be the perſon ſuſpecting or ſuſpected, neither will abſolve her from that Love to her husband ſhe has ſworn to pay.

Of parting upon little diſguſts.

10. But alas what hope is there that theſe greater temtations ſhall be reſiſted, when we ſee every the ſlighteſt diſguſt is now adaies too ſtrong for the matrimonial Love. Nay indeed it do's of courſe fall off of it ſelf; which is an event ſo much expected, that 'tis no wonder to ſee it expire with the firſt circuit of the moon; but 'tis every bodies admiration to ſee it laſt one of the ſun. And ſomtimes it vaniſhes ſo clearly, as not to leave ſo much as a ſhadow behind it, not ſo much as the formalities of Marriage: one bed, one houſe cannot hold them, as if they had bin put together

together like caſeſhot in a gun, only that they might the more forcibly ſcatter ſeveral waies. Nay as if this were deſign'd and intended in the firſt addreſſes unto marriage, a ſeparate maintenance is of courſe aforehand contracted for, and becomes as ſolemn a part of the ſettlement, as a Jointure is. *Plutarch* obſerves of the ancient Romans, that for two hundred and thirty years after the founding of their State, there never was one example of any married couple that ſeparated: it is not likely they could have a more binding form of marriage then ours is, the difference muſt lie between their Veracity and our Falſeneſs.

The miſchief of its being thought an unfaſhionable thing for a wife to be ſeen in her husbands company.

11. But even amongſt thoſe who deſert not each other, too many do mutually fall from that entireneſs and affection which is the ſoul of marriage; and to help on the declination, there are faſhionable Maxims taken up, to make men and their wives the greateſt ſtrangers to each other. Thus 'tis pronounc'd a piece of ill Breeding, a ſign of a country Gentleman, to ſee a man go abroad with his own wife (I ſuppoſe thoſe who brought up theſe rules are not to ſeek what uſe to make of them.) And were the time of moſt of the modiſh couples computed, 'twould be found they are but few of their waking hours (I might ſay minutes) together: ſo that if nothing elſe, meer deſuetude and intermiſſion of converſation muſt needs allay, if not quite extinguiſh their kindneſs. But I hope there are yet many who do not think the autority of a faſhion greater then that of a vow: and ſuch will ſtill think it their duty both to own and cheriſh that kindneſs and affection they have ſo ſolemnly promis'd.

The debt of fidelity of the wife to the husband.

12. Another debt to the perſon of a husband is Fidelity: for as ſhe has eſpous'd all his intereſts, ſo ſhe is oblig'd to be true to them, to keep all his ſecrets, to inform him of his dangers, yea and in a mild and gentle manner to admoniſh him of his faults. This is the moſt genuine act of friendſhip; therefore ſhe who is plac'd in the neareſt and moſt intimate degree of that relation, muſt not be wanting in it. She that lies in his boſom ſhould be a kind of ſecond Conſcience to him, by putting him in mind both of his duty and his aberration: and as long as ſhe can be but patiently heard, 'tis her ſin to omit it; 'tis the greateſt trechery to his nobleſt, to his immortal part, and ſuch as the moſt officious cares of his other intereſt can never expiate. Nay indeed ſhe is unfaithful to her ſelf in it, there being nothing that do's ſo much ſecure the happineſs of a Wife as the Vertue and Piety of the Husband. Yet, tho this is to have her chiefeſt care, as being his principal intereſt, ſhe is to neglect none of the inferior, but contribute her utmoſt to his advantage in all his concerns.

Particularly to his bed.

13. Beyond all theſe the matrimonial fidelity has a ſpecial notion as it relates to the Bed; and in that the wife is to be moſt ſeverely ſcrupulous, and never to admit ſo much as a thought or imagination, much leſs any parly or treaty contrary to her loialty. 'Tis true wantonneſs is one of the fouleſt blots that can ſtain any of the ſex; but 'tis infinitly more odious in the married, it being in them an accumulation of crimes, perjury added to uncleanneſs, the infamy of their family ſuperſtructed upon their own. And accordingly all laws have made a difference in their puniſhments. Adultery was by Gods own award puniſht with death among the Jews, *Lev.* 20. 10. And it ſeems it was ſo agreeable to natural Juſtice, that divers other nations did the like; and I know no reaſon, but the difficulty of detection, that ſhould any where give it a milder ſentence. The ſon of *Sirach* has excellently deſcrib'd the ſeveral gradations of the

guilt, *Eccluſ.* 23. 23. which I ſhall deſire the Reader to conſult: which who ſo do's muſt certainly wonder at the Alchymy of this age, that from ſuch a maſs of ſhame and infamy can extract matter of confidence: that thoſe who lie under ſo many brands and ſtigmas, are ſo far from hiding their faces, that none ſhew them with ſo much boldneſs, and the aſſurance of the guilty far exceeds that of the innocent. But impudence is a ſlender ſhelter for guilt, and ſerves rather to betray then hide: ſo that they are not able to outface the opinions of men, much leſs can they the judgments of God; who as he was ſolemnly invok'd as Witneſs to their Vow, ſo by his Omnipreſence is againſt their wills a Witneſs too of its violations.

The duty of Obedience.

14. Another Duty to the perſon of the Husband is Obedience, a word of a very harſh ſound in the ears of ſome Wives, but is certainly the duty of all: and that not only by their promiſe of it, tho that were ſufficient; but from an original of much older date, it being the mulct that was laid upon the firſt Womans diſobedience to God, that ſhe (and all deriv'd from her) ſhould be ſubject to the Husband; ſo that the contending for ſuperiority, is an attemt to reverſe that Fundamental Law, which is almoſt as ancient as the World. But ſurely God, with whom there is no ſhadow of change, will not make Acts of repeal to ſatisfie the petulancy of a few maſterleſs Women. That Statute will ſtill ſtand in force, and if it cannot aw them into an Obſervance, will not fail to conſign them to Puniſhment. And indeed this fault is commonly its own lictor, and do's anticipate (tho not avert) its final doom. The imperiouſneſs of a Woman do's often raiſe thoſe Storms, wherein her ſelf is Shipwrack'd. How pleaſantly might many Women have liv'd, if they had not affected Dominion? Nay, how much of their Will might they have had, if they had not ſtrugled for it? For let a Man be of never ſo gentle a Temper (unleſs his Head be ſofter then his Heart) ſuch a Uſurpation will awake him to aſſert his Right. But if he be of a ſowre ſevere Nature, if he have as great a deſire of Rule as ſhe, back'd with a much better Title, what Tempeſts, what Hurricanes muſt two ſuch oppoſite Winds produce? And at laſt 'tis commonly the Wives lot, after an uncreditable unjuſt War, to make as diſadvantageous a Peace; this (like all other ineffective Rebellions) ſerving to ſtraiten her Yoke, to turn an ingenious Subjection into a ſlaviſh Servitude: ſo that certainly it is not only the Vertue, but the Wiſdom of Wives to do that upon Duty, which at laſt they muſt (with more unſupportable Circumſtances) do upon Neceſſity.

The duty of concern for the husbands reputation.

15. And as they ow theſe Severals to the perſon of the Husband, ſo there is alſo a debt to his Reputation. This they are to be extremely tender of, to advance it, by making all that is good in him as conſpicuous, as public as they can; ſetting his worth in the cleareſt light, but putting his infirmities in the Shade; caſting a Veil upon thoſe to skreen them from the eies of others, nay (as far as is poſſible) from their own two; there being nothing acquir'd to the Wife by contemplating the Husbands weakneſs, but a temtation of deſpiſing him; which tho bad enough in it ſelf, is yet rendred worſe by that train of miſchievous conſequences which uſually attend it. In caſe therefore of any notable Imperfections in him, her ſafeſt way will be to conſider them no farther then ſhe can be inſtrumental to the curing them; but to divert from thoſe, and reflect upon her own, which perhaps if impartially weighed, may ballance, if not overpoiſe his. And indeed thoſe Wives who are apt to blaze their Husbands Faults, do ſhew that they have either little adverted to their own, or elſe

elſe find them ſo great, that they are forc'd to that Art of diverſion, and ſeek in his Infamy to drown theirs. But that project is a little unlucky, for nothing do's in ſober Judges, create greater prejudice to a Woman, then to ſee her forward in impeaching her Husband.

16. But beſides this immediate tenderneſs of his Reputation, there is another by way of reflection, which conſiſts in a care that ſhe her ſelf do nothing which may redound to his diſhonor. There is ſo ſtrict a Union between a Man and his Wife, that the Law counts them one Perſon, and conſequently they can have no divided Intereſt, ſo that the misbehavior of the Woman reflects ignominiouſly on the Man; it therefore concerns them, as well upon their Husbands as their own account, to abſtain even from all appearance of evil, and provide that themſelves be (what *Ceſar* is ſaid to have requir'd of his Wife) not only without guilt, but without ſcandal alſo. *This is beſt ſhew, in a care of doing nothing which may redound to the husbands dishonor.*

17. Another part of the Wives Duty relates to her Husbands Fortune, the management whereof is not ordinarily the Wives Province, but where the Husband thinks fit to make it ſo, ſhe is oblig'd to adminiſter it with her beſt Care and Induſtry; not by any neglect of hers to give others opportunity of defrauding him: yet on the other ſide, not by an immoderate tenacity or griping, to bring upon him and her ſelf the reproach, and which is worſe, the Curſe that attends Exaction and Oppreſſion. But this is not uſually the Wives field of action, tho he that ſhall conſider the deſcription which *Solomon* gives of a vertuous Wife, *Prov.* 31. will be apt to think her Province is not ſo narrow and confin'd, as the humor of the Age would repreſent it. He tells us, *That ſhe ſeeks wooll and flax, and works diligently with her hands: that ſhe is like the merchants ſhips, and brings her food from far.* That *ſhe conſiders a field, and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands plants a vineyard, &c.* And leſt this ſhould be imagin'd to be the Character of a mean Country Dame, he adds, That *her houſhold is clothed in ſcarlet*, and that *her husband ſits among the elders of the land.* It were eaſie to give inſtances from Hiſtory, of the advantageous menage and active induſtry of Wives, not only in ſingle Perſons, but whole Nations. But nothing can be more pregnant, then that among the Romans: in the very height and flouriſh of the Empire, *Auguſtus* himſelf *ſcarce wore any thing but of the manufacture of his wife, his ſiſter, daughters, and neeces*, as *Suetonius* aſſures us. Should the gay *lilies of our fields, which neither ſow nor ſpin, nor gather into barns*, be exemted from furniſhing others, and left to cloth themſelves, 'tis to be doubted they would reverſe our Saviors Parallel of *Solomons glories*, and no beggar in all his rags *would be araied like one of theſe*, *Luke* 12. 27. *The duty of the wife to the husbands fortune.*

18. But we will be yet more kind, and impoſe only negative thrift on the Wife, not to waſt and embezle her Husbands Eſtate, but to confine her Expences within ſuch limits as that can eaſily admit; a Caution, which if all Women had obſerv'd, many noble Families had bin preſerv'd, of which there now remains no other Memorial, but that they fell a Sacrifice to the profuſe Vanity of a Woman; and I fear, this Age is like to provide many more ſuch Monuments for the next. Our Ladies, as if they emulated the Roman Luxury (which *Seneca* and *Pliny* deſcribe with ſo much indignation) do ſomtimes wear about them the Revenues of a rich Family; and thoſe that cannot reach to that, ſhew how much 'tis againſt their wills they fall lower, by the vaſt variety and exceſs of ſuch things as they can poſſibly compaſs; ſo much extravagance not only in their own Dreſs, but that of their Houſes and Apartments, as if their vanity, *Not to ſpend in the ambition of ſloths, jewels, and furniture.*

vanity, like the Leproſie we read of, *Lev.* 14. had infected the very Walls. And indeed, 'tis a very ſpreading fretting one, for the Furniture oft conſumes the Houſe, and the Houſe conſumes the Land: ſo that if ſome Gentlemen were to calculate their Eſtates, they might reduce all to the Inventory of *Scopias* the *Theſſalian*, who profeſt his All lay only in ſuch Toies as did him no good. Women are now skilful Chymiſts, and can quickly turn their Husbands Earth into Gold: but they purſue the Experiment too far, make that Gold too volatile, and let it all vapor away in inſignificant (tho gaudy) Trifles.

The expence of the Town.

19. Nor is it ever like to be otherwiſe with thoſe that immoderatly affect the Town, that Forge of Vanity, which ſupplies a perpetual Spring of new temtations. 'Tis true, there are ſome Ladies who are neceſſarily engaged to be there: their Husbands Emploiments or Fortunes have mark'd that out as their proper ſtation, and where the ground of their ſtay is their duty, there is more reaſon to hope it will not betray them to ill, for temtations are moſt apt to aſſault ſtraglers, thoſe that put themſelves out of their proper road. And truly I ſee not who can more properly be ſaid to be ſo, then thoſe Women whoſe means of ſubſiſtence lies in the Country, and yet will ſpend it no where but at *London*, which ſeems to carry ſomthing of oppoſition to Gods Providence, who ſurely never caus'd their lot to fall, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *in a fair grounnd, in goodly heritages*, *Pſal.* 16. with an intent they ſhould never inhabit them. The twelve Tribes of *Iſrael* had their peculiar Portions in *Canaan* aſſign'd them by lot, *Joſh.* 14. 2. and every one acquieſced in his part, dwelt in his own Inheritance: had they bin impatient of living any where but in the Metropolis, had they all crouded to *Jeruſalem*, all the reſt of the Land would have bin as deſolate before the Captivity as it was after, none would have bin left but ſuch as *Nabuzaradan* permitted to ſtay, *Jer.* 52. 16. *ſome of the poor to dreſs the vines, and to till the ground.* And truly, the ſame is like to be the fate of this Nation, if this humor goes on as it has begun; which may in time prove as miſchievous to the public, as it daily is to private Families.

The obligations of the Gentry to the Country.

20. But beſides this 'tis yet farther to be conſider'd, that where God gives an eſtate, he as the ſupreme Landlord affixes ſomthing of duty, laies a kind of rent charge upon it, expects it ſhould maintain both hoſpitality and charity; and ſure both theſe are fitteſt to be done upon the place whence the ability of them riſes. All public taxes uſe to be levyed where the eſtate lies, and I know not why theſe which are Gods aſſeſments upon it, ſhould not be paid there too. When a Gentlemans land becomes profitable unto him by the ſweat and labor of his poor neighbors and tenants, 'twill be a kind of *muzling the ox* 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. if they never taſt of the fruit of their pains, if they ſhall never have the refreſhment of a good meal, or an alms; which they are not very like to meet with, if all the profits be ſent up to maintain an equipage, and keep up a parade in Town. But alas 'tis often not only the annual profits that go that way, not only the crop, but the ſoil too; thoſe luxuries uſually prey upon the vitals, eat out the very heart of an eſtate, and many have ſtay'd in the Town 'till they have nothing left in the Country to retire to.

The ruin of the family and poſterity ow'd to the deſerting the Country.

21. Now where this proceeds from the Wife, what account can ſhe give to her Husband, whoſe eaſineſs and indulgence (for that muſt be ſuppos'd in the caſe) ſhe has ſo abus'd? as alſo to her poſterity and family who for her pride muſt be brought low, reduc'd to a condition beneath their quality, becauſe ſhe affected to live above it? But ſhe will yet worſe anſwer

ſwer it to her ſelf, on whom ſhe has brought not only the inconvenience but the guilt. 'Tis ſure a lofty mind will feel ſmart enough of a fall, a diminution, much more an indigence will be ſufficiently grievous to a vain and laviſh humor; yet here it will farther have an additional ſting from the conſcience, that ſhe ow's it only to her own pride and folly, a moſt imbittering conſideration, and ſuch as advances the affliction beyond that of a more innocent poverty, as much as the pain of an envenom'd arrow exceeds that of another.

The wives empoveriſhing her huſband a manifold robbery.

22. But the ſaddeſt reckoning of all is that which ſhe is to make to God, who has declar'd he hates robbery tho for a burnt-offering to himſelf. How will he then deteſt this robbery, this impoveriſhing of the husband, when 'tis only to make an oblation to vanity and exceſs? It ſhould therefore be the care of all Wives to keep themſelves from a guilt for which God and man, yea and themſelves alſo ſhall equally accuſe them, and to keep their expences within ſuch limits, that as bees ſuck but do not violate or deface the flowers, ſo they as joint proprietaries with the husbands, may enjoy but not devour and deſtroy his fortune.

The duties to be perform'd to the huſband, muſt be paid to the bad as well as good.

23. I have now run thro the duties to be perform'd unto the Husband, wherein I have not uſed the exactneſs of a caſuiſt in curiouſly anatomizing every part, and ſhewing all the moſt minute particulars reducible to each head. I have only drawn out the greater lines, and inſiſted on thoſe wherein Wives are moſt frequently deficient. I ſhall only add this caution, that whatever is duty to the husband, is equally ſo, be he good or ill. The Apoſtle commands ſubjection and fidelity, even to Heathen Huſbands, 1 *Pet.* 3. 12. and 'tis not now their defect either in Piety or Morality, that can abſolve the Wife. For, beſides the inconvenience of making her duty precarious and liable to be ſubſtracted upon every pretence of demerit, ſhe has by ſolemn Contract renounc'd that liberty, and in her Marriage-vow taken him for better for worſe; and it is too late *after Vows to make enquiry, Prov.* 20. 25. to ſeek to break looſe from that Bond of her Soul; and how uneaſie ſoever the perverſneſs of the Husband may render it, he cannot thereby make it leſs, but more rewardable by God. For what the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the caſe of Servants, is no leſs appliable to this, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. *for this is thank-worthy, if for conſcience towards God ye endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully.* Whatever duty is perform'd to Man with aſpect on God, he owns as to himſelf; ſo that how unworthy ſoever the Husband may be, the Wife cannot miſplace her obſervance, whilſt ſhe finally terminates it on that infinit Goodneſs and Majeſty to whom no love or obedience can be enough.

The duty of a wife as a mother.

24. From this relation of a Wife, there ordinarily ſprings another, that of a Mother, to which there belongs a diſtinct duty, which may be branched into many ſeverals: but I ſhall at preſent only reduce them to two Heads, Love and Care. A Mother is a title of ſo much Tenderneſs, that we find it borrowed by our common Dialect to expreſs the moſt exuberant Kindneſs; nay, even in Sacred Stile it has the ſame uſe, and is often ſet as the higheſt Example our weakneſs can comprehend of the Divine Compaſſions. So that Nature ſeems ſufficiently to have ſecur'd the love of Mothers to their Children, without the aid of any poſitive Law. Yet we find this, (as other Inſtincts of Nature) is ſomtimes violated, and oftner perverted and applied to miſtaken purpoſes: the firſt is by a defect of Love; the other, by an imprudent exceſs of it: the defect do's, I preſume, more rarely occur then the other; yet it doth ſomtimes happen, and that either from a moroſe ſowrneſs of humor, or elſe

from too vehement an intention on ſomthing elſe.

25. Some Women have ſuch a ruggedneſs of Nature, that they can love nothing; the ugly Paſſions of Anger and Envy have, like *Pharaoh*'s lean Kine, eat up the more amiable of Love and Joy. *Plato* was wont to adviſe crabbed auſtere Tempers, to Sacrifice to the *Graces*; and ſuch as theſe had need have a great deal of Chriſtian Philoſophy, to allay and ſweeten their native Bitterneſs. But there are others that are not void of the affection of Love, but 'tis foreſtall'd by ſome other Object, and ſo diverted from their Children. And 'tis a little to be doubted, thoſe Objects which ſo divert are none of the beſt, for the Wiſdom of God has diſpos'd all duty into ſuch a Harmony and Conſent of Parts, that one interferes not with another. If we love no prohibited thing, all the regular Objects of our kindneſs will agree well enough, and one need never ſupplant another. And indeed 'tis oft obſervable, that thoſe Women who immoderatly love their own Pleſures, do leſt regard their Children; they look on them as Clogs to keep them within doors, and think their adverting to them, will hinder their free range abroad; thoſe are turn'd off to the care of a Nurſe or Maid, whilſt perhaps a Dog or a Monkey is thought worthy their own attendance.

Who had rather have a dog in their lap, then a Child.

26. *Plutarch* relates it as a Sarcaſm of *Ceſars* to ſome Foreigners whom he ſaw (at *Rome*) ſtrangely fond of ſuch little Animals, that he ask'd them, Whether the Women in their Country had no Children; thereby intimating, how unreaſonable it was for thoſe that had, to beſtow their Careſſes on ſuch Creatures. And ſurely he would not have given a milder Reprimand to ſome of our Ladies, who not only pleaſe, but pride themſelves in thoſe little Brutes, ſhew them to all Comers, when perhaps you may converſe with them divers daies, before you ſhall, by any mention of theirs, know that they have a Child.

The fault of not nurſing Children.

27. To this defect of Love, many are apt to impute the Mothers tranſferring the Nurſing her Child to another. I am not forward to pronounce of it, being loth to involve ſo many as I then muſt in the imputation of unnaturalneſs; I rather think it is taken up as a piece of State and Greatneſs; for no other motive, but what is founded in their Quality, could ſo univerſally prevail with all that are of it. But ſure this is one of the vain Punctillio's wherewith this Age abounds. For whatever rank the Mother is of, the Child carries proportion to it, and there is the ſame equality between the greateſt Lady and her own Child, as is between the meaneſt Beggar and hers: tho indeed if there were any condeſcenſion in it, the averſions of that ought not to outweigh the impulſes of Nature, and the many advantages the Child may receive by taking its Nouriſhment whence it deriv'd its Subſtance. And therefore, tho I will not be too poſitive in aſſerting the neceſſity, yet I confeſs, I cannot but look with reverence upon thoſe few Perſons of Honor, who have broke thro an unreaſonable Cuſtom, and preferr'd the good of their Children before that fantaſtic priviledg of Greatneſs. And ſuch muſt in all Juſtice be acknowledg'd to have given a much better evidence of their love to their Children, then the others.

A fault noted by heathen writers and others.

28. There is in *A. Gellius*, in his fourteenth Book, ſo fine a Diſcourſe on this ſubject, where *Favorinus* the Philoſopher is introduced, perſwading a Noble Lady, notwithſtanding the uſual Excuſes, to nurſe her Child; that nothing beſides the length, could temt me to omit the tranſcribing it: unleſs happily the little ſucceſs, which a Noble Perſon of the ſame Sex here concern'd, I mean the Counteſs of *Lincoln*, in the Ingenious Book wrote

wrote by her, and call'd her Nurſery, be a ſufficient ground of deſpairing to convince by any thing that can be ſaid. However, let theſe delicate ones conſider the ſevere words of the Prophet, *Lament.* 4. 3. *The ſea-monſters draw out the breaſt, they give ſuck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel like the oſtrich in the Wilderneſs, who is hardned againſt her young ones, as tho they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear, becauſe God hath deprived her of wiſdom, neither hath he imparted to her underſtanding*, Job 39. 16, 17.

29. But as there may be a fault in the defect, ſo there may be alſo in the exceſs of love. God is the only unlimited object of our Love, towards all others 'tis eaſie to become inordinate, and in no inſtance more then in this of children. The love of a Parent is deſcending, and all things move moſt violently downwards: ſo that whereas that of children to their Parents commonly needs a ſpur, this of the Parent often needs a bridle, eſpecially that of the Mother, which (by ſtrength of feminine paſſion) do's uſually exceed the love of the Father. Now to regulate this affection, ſhe is to advert to theſe two rules, firſt that ſhe hurt not her ſelf by it, and ſecondly that ſhe hurt not her children. Of the firſt ſhe is in danger if ſhe ſuffer that Human affection to ſwell beyond its banks, ſo as to come in any competition with the Divine. This is to make an Idol of her child, for every thing is ſo to us, which rivals the love of God in our hearts, and he who owns the title of a Jealous God, may be provok'd as well by the bowing our ſouls to a living image, as the proſtration of our bodies to a dead. Accordingly we oft ſee the effects of his Jealouſy in this particular. The doting affection of the Mother, is frequently puniſh'd with the untimely death of the Children; or if not with that, 'tis many times with a ſeverer ſcourge: they live (but as it was foretold to *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 33.) *to grieve her eyes, and to conſume her heart*, to be ruinous to themſelves, and afflictions to their friends, and to force their unhappy mothers to that ſad acclamation *Luke* 23. 29. *Bleſſed are the wombs which bare not.*

There may be a fault alſo in exceſs of Love.

30. And as this proves often true, when the dotage is general upon all the Children, ſo do's it oftner when 'tis more partial and fix'd upon any one: that Darling which ſhe makes the only object of her Joy, uſually becomes that of her Sorrow. It is an ordinary infirmity in Parents, to heap all their kindneſs upon one to the defrauding of the reſt, and too many times upon very undue motives: a little excelling in point of Beauty turns the ſcales, when perhaps many more ſolid Excellencies are the counterpoiſe. And ſurely this is not only unjuſt but irrational in the Parent: for all peculiarity of favor in a Superior ſhould be diſpenc'd either by way of Reward, or Encouragement; and neither of thoſe ends can take place, where 'tis only the outward form that is conſider'd. For that cannot be rewardable, to which the party has contributed nothing; and the *Pſalmiſt* will tell us, That *'tis God that hath made us, and not we our ſelves*, *Pſalm* 100. 2. And as little room is there for the other end, that of encouragement. For as our Savior tells us, *Matth.* 6. none can add a cubit to his ſtature, nor make one hair white or black: 'tis certain themſelves cannot really do either, tho by the aid of Artificial Hypocriſie they frequently appear to do both. But thoſe are Arts which neither deſerve nor want encouragement: the natural Beauty muſt have its increaſe from the ſame ſource whence it deriv'd its being. There is therefore no reaſonable account to be given, why a Child ſhould be preferr'd for any ſuch exterior excellency.

Which if not extended to all, is partial to ſome.

The only justifiable ground of partiality is their vertue

31. The only juſtifiable ground of partiality to Children is their Vertue, for to that their own choice concurs, and ſo may intitle them to reward; and 'tis alſo in their power to advance; and ſo encouragements are not caſt away upon them. Nay, the influences of thoſe may extend farther, and provoke a vertuous emulation in the reſt. But then the mother muſt ſo manage it, as to evidence that 'tis no inequality in her own inclination, but merely the force of the others deſert; not the Perſon, but the Goodneſs that biaſſes her: and when Vertue is known to be the only ingratiating Quality, they will at once learn the way to become hers and Gods Favorites. And unleſs it be upon this one deſign, 'tis a very unſafe thing for a Parent to make any partial diſcrimination among Children, which is ſure to temt the more neglected, both to repine at her, and envy her Darlings. And oftentimes ſuch ſeeds of rancor have bin by that means ſowed in Children, as have bin hard to eradicate in their riper Years. Nor is the miſchief leſs which ſhe do's to her Fondlings, who beſides that they are expos'd to the malice of the reſt, are uſually ſpoil'd by it, made inſolent and untractable, perhaps their whole lives after: for where the Mothers affection is unbridled, commonly the Childs will is ſo too, her fondneſs ſuperſeding that diſcipline and correction, which ſhould, as the Wiſe Man ſpeaks, *bow down its neck from its youth.*

General indulgence is worſe then partial.

32. And the like may be ſaid where the indulgence is more univerſal to all the Children; which is in one reſpect worſe then the partial, becauſe it ſpoils more, not one or two, but all the brood. The doting love of a Mother blinds her eies, that ſhe cannot ſee their faults; manacles her hands, that ſhe cannot chaſtiſe them, and ſo their Vices are permitted to grow up with themſelves. As their Joints knit and gather ſtrength, ſo do their ill habits, till at laſt they are confirm'd into an Obſtinacy; ſo ſetting them in a perfect oppoſition to that Pattern they ſhould imitate: for as Chriſt's childhood *increaſt in wiſdom*, and the Divine Favor, *Luke* 2. ſo do theirs in all thoſe provoking follies, which may avert both the love of God and Man. And alas what recompence can the little blandiſhments and careſſes of a Mother make her Children, for ſuch important, ſuch ineſtimable miſchiefs? So that ſhe that will be really kind, muſt temper her Indulgence with a prudent ſeverity, or elſe ſhe eminently violates the ſecond rule, by which ſhe ſhould regulate her love, and do's that to her Children, which *Jacob* fear'd from his Father, *Gen.* 27. *Brings a curſe upon them, and not a bleſſing.*

Of the Mothers care of Children.

33. Indeed the beſt way of approving their Love, is by well diſcharging the other Branch of their duty, that of Care. Without this, all the moſt paſſionate raptures of Kindneſs are but an airy Apparition, a fantaſtic Scene, and will no more advantage a Child, then the whole Shambles in Picture can feed and nouriſh it. Now this care is not a temporary, momentary Duty, for ſome one critical inſtant; but is to attend the Child thro the ſeveral ſtages of its Minority, *viz.* Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. The very firſt part of their Infancy, is a ſeaſon only for thoſe Cares which concern their Bodies, providing for their careful Attendance, and all other things conducing to the ſtrengthning their Conſtitutions, and laying a foundation for future Health and Vigor. Which is their intereſt not only upon a Bodily, but upon an Intellectual account, the good temperature of the Body being a great aid towards the free operations of the Mind. And therefore *Socrates*, and other Philoſophers, much recommend to their Diſciples the care of Health, as that which freed the Soul from many incumbrances in its purſuit of Knowledg: and it

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was the comprehenſive Praier of the Poet, *That the Gods would grant a ſound Mind in a healthful Body.*

34. But this Health is not alwaies the conſequent of a very nice and tender Breeding, but is very oft overthrown by it; and if Ladies could but find in their hearts to try it, they would, I doubt not, find, that the inuring them to moderate Hardſhips, would much more conduce to the eſtabliſhing and fortifying their Conſtitutions. *The inuring them to moderate hardſhips.*

35. Beyond all this, the care for their Exterior is ſoon overtaken by a more important one, that of their Interior, in the timing of which there ſeems to be a very common miſtake in the World. We look upon the ſeven Years of Infancy, as the life merely of an Animal, to be ſpent only in the entertainments of Senſe: and as we uſe not to yoak Calves, or back young Colts, ſo we think our Children are for a while to be left at the ſame liberty, to have no reſtraint put on any of their Paſſions. Nay many times we excite and foment them, teach Children to be angry and envious, proud and ſullen, as if we fear'd their Natural Propenſions to all theſe were too faint, and wanted the help of Inſtitutions. But ſurely this is a great and pernicious Error, and this ſuppoſing Children to be ſo long Brutes, is the way to make them ſo longer. The Patrons of Atheiſm make it a moſt conſtant Topic in the diſparagement of Religion, that 'tis ow'd to the prejudices infuſed in the firſt Infancy: 'twere to be wiſht, that this Objection might ſo far be complied with, that the fear of God, the love of Vertue, and hatred of Vice, might have the firſt poſſeſſion of the Soul; and they be made to moderate their Paſſions, as ſoon as they are in a capacity to have them excited and engag'd. *Of early inſtitution.*

36. And truly, if we will obſerve it, we may ſee very early dawnings of reaſon in Infants, which would ſooner come to a brightneſs, if we would betimes ſet to the ſcattering of thoſe Paſſions which eclipſe and darken it. A Child will quickly be taught to know what pleaſes or diſpleaſes a Parent, and by a very little taſt of Reward or Puniſhment will learn to do the one, and avoid the other: and when this is don, the Parent has gain'd the fundamental Point, *That of obedience*, and may ſuperſtruct on it what ſhe pleaſes, and then 'tis her fault if the Child be not by eaſie and inſenſible degrees moulded into a right form. 'Tis at firſt all one to the Child, whether he name God in an Oath or in his Praiers; but a Mother by Puniſhing the one, and Rewarding the other, will quickly bring him to know there is a difference, and ſo proportionably in other Inſtances. As to the way of Diſcipline, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, That when there is occaſion for Severity, 'tis better to aw by actual Puniſhment then Terror, and never to make uſe of Infinit and Inviſible Affrightments, the beloved methods of Nurſes and Servants, ſuch as are the menacing of Sprights and Mormo's, and leaving in the dark, that frequently make daſtardly and timerous Impreſſions, which a long Age ſcarcely wears off. *The diſcipline of puniſhment is ſafer then that of terror.*

37. A ſober ſenſe of things, is to be impreſſed by treatable means, and this will be don with moſt eaſe, both to the Parent and Child, the ſooner 'tis ſet upon. The will of a tender Infant, is like its Limbs, ſupple and pliant, but time confirms it, and cuſtom hardens it: ſo that 'tis a cruel Indulgence to the poor Creature, to let it contract ſuch Habits, which muſt coſt him ſo dear the breaking, or dearer if never broken. And if this early care be taken of the Infancy, 'twill much eaſe the next part, that of the Childhood; for where the Iron ſinew in the neck is broken, where the native Stubborneſs is ſubdued ſo early, the Yoke will ſit eaſie, all ſucceeding *Stubborneſs broken in infancy, will be the eaſier ſubdued in childhood.*

ceeding parts of Diſcipline will come with more facility and profit. The care proper to this Age, is the inſtructing in all parts of uſeful Knowledg, of which as the Divine, for the excellency both of its nature and its end, muſt be firſt ranked, ſo ſhould it be firſt and moſt induſtriouſly cultivated, and by all endearing methods impreſt, not only on the Underſtanding, but the Heart. Piety and Vertue ſhould be propos'd to Children as the moſt amiable, as well as neceſſary things, and they ſhould be invited not only to know, but love them.

The care of teaching not to be put off to Servants and Governeſſes.

38. This part of Learning is equally competent to both Sexes, and therefore when the Sons are remov'd from under the Mothers tuition, and ſent to more public places of Erudition, her Province is ſtill the ſame as to her Daughters, to whom ſhe ſhould not only Preach, but exemplify it in her own Practice, no Precepts penetrating ſo much into Youth, as thoſe that are ſo inforc'd. And in order to this, I ſhould commend to Mothers, the being as much with them as they can, and taking the perſonal Inſpection of them; not to turn them off wholly to Servants, no nor yet Governeſſes, but frequently themſelves to examin how they proceed in the Speculative part of Knowledg, and no leſs frequently exhort them to the Practic.

Beſides care there is prudence requiſit in inſtitution

39. *Marcus Cato* would not let his Son learn of his Slave, as diſdaining a Child ſhould ow ſo conſiderable a benefit to ſo ſervile a Perſon; and if he thought the mere teaching of Grammar too great a charge for ſuch a one, ſurely the whole Inſtitution of Youth is a much greater, it being that on which, not only a few outward Accompliſhments, but even their Eternity depends. The great *Cornelia*, Mother of the *Gracchi*, and *Aurelia* the Mother of *Auguſtus*, thought it worth their pains to be Governeſſes. And the truth is, the Soul of a Child is a little too precious a Truſt to commit wholly to the diligence and care of a mercenary Servant. Or if they happen not to want thoſe Qualifications, yet 'tis very poſſible they may Prudence, of which there is no ſmall degree requiſit to the Inſtructing of Youth, too great a remiſneſs or ſeverity being equally deſtructive in that Affair. And indeed, beſides theſe immediat, there are ſome other collateral Benefits conſequent to the Mothers performing that Office: 'twill bring her and her Children into an Intimacy and Converſation, give her an acquaintance with their ſeveral Capacities and Humors; for want of which, many Parents have err'd in their Conduct, one ſort of Treatment being not fit for all Children, and the diſtinguiſhing that depending wholly on their diſcerning their particular Tempers, which cannot well be done without ſome converſe with them.

If Children be permitted to trifle away their time, they will alſo their innocence.

40. Beſides, by this they will be witneſſes how they diſpoſe their Time, that they neither looſe it by doing nothing, nor yet miſemploy it by doing ill. And indeed there is ſcarce any part of the Parents care more important then this, Idleneſs being no farther remov'd from Vice, then a Cauſe is from its immediat Effect. Therefore if Children be permitted to trifle away their Time, they will ſoon learn to trifle away their Innocence alſo. So that 'tis highly neceſſary that they be provided of a ſucceſſion of Emploiments, that by the variety they may be inſenſibly drawn on. Nay methinks, it might very well be contriv'd that their Recreations might ſomtimes conſiſt of ſuch ingenuous Exerciſes, that they may at once both play and learn.

Children by being with the Mother are reſcued from the Society of Servants.

41. There is yet another good effect of the Mothers preſence with the Children (which is perhaps no leſs material then any of the former:) 'tis, that by this aſſociating them with her ſelf, ſhe prevents the danger of

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worſe Society. Children, if the Parents allow them not their company, are neceſſarily caſt upon that of Servants, then which there is ſcarce a greater danger that attends Youth. For beſides, that low ſort of converſe debaſes their Minds, makes them mean and ſordid, it often corrupts their Manners too; Children uſually not receiving more peſtilent Infuſions from any then ſuch. Servants that deſire to ingratiate themſelves, and have no laudable quality whereby to do it, muſt firſt endeavor to ingratiate Vice to them, and then by their officious miniſteries in that, have a ready way of introducing themſelves into favor. Perhaps this will be thought to concern only the Maſculine part of Children, and that the Female, who are commonly in a diſtinct Apartment, and converſe only with their own Sex, are more ſecure. But I would not adviſe Mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no ſurer that their Daughters ſhall not converſe with Men, nay Men of the meaner ſort too, then that their Maids and attendants ſhall not do ſo. And when 'tis conſider'd, how apt thoſe are to entertain, if not to invite Amours, 'tis not very probable the Rooms where they quarter ſhall be inacceſſible to thoſe they affect. And it were much ſafer for Children to be in the moſt public concourſe of Men, then to be witneſſes and obſervers of the private Intrigues of ſuch Lovers. The memories of Youth are very tenacious, and if they once be tainted with any indecent thing, will be apt to recollect it, 'till at laſt perhaps they come to tranſcribe it. 'Tis therefore in this reſpect a very uſeful part of the Mothers care, to make her ſelf company to her Daughters, to prevent the dangers of a more unequal and infectious Converſe.

Such freedom to be allowed by Mothers, that Children may not ſhun their Company.

42. But if this be uſeful in Childhood, 'tis no leſs then neceſſary in the next Period of their time, when they arrive near the growth and age of Women. Then indeed the Mother ſhould not only make them her Companions, but her Friends, allow them ſuch a kind, yet modeſt Freedom, that they may have a complacence in her Company, and not be temted to ſeek it among their Inferiors. That the belief of their kindneſs may ſupplant the pretenſions of thoſe meaner Sycophants, who by little flatteries endeavor to ſcrew themſelves into their good opinion, and become their Confidents: then which there is nothing more miſchievous, thoſe private Cabals that are held with ſuch, ſerving only to render them mutinous againſt their Parents; theſe Family Incendiaries, like thoſe in the State and Church, ſtill inculcating the one grand Principle of Liberty, a word ſo charming to our deprav'd Nature, and eſpecially to Youth, that they ſhould not be truſted with ſuch Lectures. Beſides thoſe intimacies are often Introductions to worſe; many ſcandalous Amours and unequal Matches having had their riſe from them. It ſhould therefore be the buſineſs of Mothers to prevent all ſuch pernicious Leagues, by preingaging them in more ſafe Familiarities, either with her ſelf, or ſome other, of whoſe Vertue ſhe has reaſon to be confident.

The beſt ſecurity for Children is the fixing a true ſenſe of Religion.

43. But the moſt infallible Security againſt this and all other Miſchiefs, is the bringing them into an intimacy and converſation with their Maker, by fixing a true ſenſe of Religion in their Hearts; if that can be effectually done, 'twill ſuperſede all other Expedients. She that duly conſiders ſhe is always in Gods preſence, will want no other Inſpector, nor will ſhe much need Monitors, who attends to the advices of her own Conſcience. Neither will it only tend to the ſecuring her Innocence, but her Reputation too; it being one part of the Chriſtian Law, *to abſtain from all appearance of evil*, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 2. *to do things that are of good report*; *Phil.* 4. 8.

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ſo that Piety is the one compleat armor to defend both their Vertue and Fame. And 'tis extremely neceſſary they ſhould be furniſht with it, at this Age eſpecially, when they do at firſt enter into the World; which we may well look on as a taking the Field, conſidering how many Aſſaults they are there like to meet with; and if they go without this Armature, they may, none knows how ſoon, be incurably wounded: of which there want not many ſad Inſtances, ſome whereof might probably have bin prevented, had the Parent taken care to have better fortified them.

'Tis a perverſe care to be ſolicitous for li tle outward accompliſhments, when Chriſtian are neglected.

44. And indeed 'tis not a little ſad to ſee how much this their moſt important Concern is neglected. Many Mothers, who are nicely curious in other parts of their Daughters breeding, are utterly inconſiderate in this. They muſt have all civil Accompliſhments, but no Chriſtian. Thoſe are excluded out of the ſcheme of Education, and by that means lie under the prejudice of being not only unneceſſary, but ungentile, below the regard of Perſons of Quality. 'Tis much to be fear'd, that this neglect toward their Children, is founded in a previous contemt of Piety in themſelves; yet I ſuppoſe 'tis often increas'd by a little Vanity they have of ſeeing them excel in ſome of thoſe exterior Qualities, which may recommend them to the humor of the World, upon the improving whereof they are ſo intent, that more material things are over-lookt. And when thoſe are acquir'd, the pride of ſhewing them betraies them to other Inconveniencies. The Mother oft not only permits, but incites the Daughter to the opportunities of boaſting her Excellencies, ſends her ſo oft abroad on that Deſign, that at laſt perhaps ſhe cannot, when ſhe would, keep her at home, as I believe too many have found experimentally true. In a word, this Interval between Childhood and Majority, is the moſt critical Point of a Womans Life, and therefore ſhould be the moſt nicely and warily attended; and a Mother had need ſummon not only all her care and diligence, but her prudence too, well to diſcharge this part of her Obligation.

The cruelty of Parents impoſition on their Children in Marriage.

45. I ſhall not inſiſt more minutely upon Particulars: I have in the former Section ſpoken ſomwhat of what 'tis fit theſe young Virgins ſhould do and avoid; and whatever by that, or by any more exact rule appears their intereſt or duty, 'tis the Mothers to ſee it be not neglected by them: but where Kindneſs alone will not prevail, to employ their Autority too, and by a diſcreet mixture of each, ſecure their obſervance by both the tenures of Love and Reverence. Yet I ſhall a little reflect upon one Particular I mention'd before, I mean that of Marrying where they have averſion; which tho I there charg'd as the Crime of the Daughter, yet I muſt here ſay the original and more inexcuſable guilt is uſually in the Parents, who are ſomtimes ſuch Idolaters to Wealth and Honor, that they Sacrifice their Children to them; a more barbarous Immolation then that to *Moloch*. For tho that were very inhuman, yet it had this alleviation, that the pain was ſhort: but a loathed Bed is at once an acute and a lingring Torment, nay, not only ſo, but a temtation too; ſo that 'tis a Tyranny of a moſt unlimited kind, extends its Effects even to Eternity: and ſure that Mother muſt have very petrified Bowels, have loſt all Natural Compaſſion, that can ſo impoſe on her Child.

Parents that have ill Children ſhould conſider how they have bin acceſſaries.

46. I ſhall add no more concerning this relation of a Mother, but only one ſhort Advice, That thoſe who groan under the fruſtration of their hopes, whoſe Children by any ſcandalous misbehavior become the Objects of their ſhame and grief, would ſoberly conſider, whether it have not

not bin ſome way owing to themſelves, either by neglect in their Education, or by their own ill Example. 'Tis uſually one, and ſomtimes both. They that upon recollection can aſſure themſelves 'tis neither, may bear the Affliction with much the greater cheerfulneſs; but they that cannot, I am ſure ought to bear it with much the more Patience and Submiſſion, take it as Gods Lecture of Repentance, and look on their Childrens faults as the product of their own. And becauſe Satisfaction is an indiſpenſible part of Repentance, they are with their utmoſt induſtry to endeavor the repairing thoſe Ruins they have made, by recalling thoſe to Vertue, who by their means have ſtraied from it. 'Tis true, the errors of Education, like a ſubtil Poiſon, do ſo mix with the Blood, ſo incorporate into the Humors and Manners, that 'twill be very difficult to allay their Effects; and therefore the leſs they are themſelves able to do towards it, the more earneſtly they muſt importune a Higher Power. He who divided the Light from the Darkneſs, can ſeparate the Effects from the Cauſes; and as he reſtrain'd the natural property of Fire, in the caſe of the three Children, *Dan.* 3. ſo He only can reſcue their Children from that deſtruction to which their negligence has expos'd them. But as to the influence their example has had, they may do ſomthing towards the redreſs of that, by ſetting them a new Copy, making their own change ſo viſible, ſo remarkable, that they may have the very ſame means of reclaiming, which there was of ſeducing them. And this is a piece of Juſtice which ſeems to call aloud upon many Mothers. The irregularities of Youth could hardly have grown to the preſent height, had they not receiv'd warmth and ſhelter from the practice of their Elders, which do's at once give encouragement and take off reſtraints, the Mother looſing not only her Autority, but her confidence to admoniſh or reprove. With what face can ſhe require that ſtrict and ſevere modeſty of a young Girl, which ſhe who ſhould be a Matron will not practice? or tie up the giddy wandring humor of Youth, within thoſe bounds ſhe thinks too ſtrait for her own? and how ready a retortion will even Scripture it ſelf afford for ſuch an Impoſer? *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? Rom.* 2. 21. Let it therefore be the care of all Mothers to live a perpetual Lecture to their Children, ſo to exemplifie to them all Vertue and Piety, that they may contribute ſomthing to their Spiritual, as well as their Natural Life; that however they may at leaſt deliver their own Souls, and not have their Childrens guilt recoil upon them as the unhappy originals of it.

47. The laſt relation of a Married Woman is that of a Miſtreſs, the inſpection of the Family being uſually her Province; and tho ſhe be not Supreme there, yet ſhe is to improve her delegated Autority to the advantage of all under it. And her more conſtant reſidence gives her more opportunities of it, then the frequent avocations of the Husband will perhaps allow him. St. *Paul* ſets it as the Calling, and indiſpenſible duty of the Married Woman, *That they guide the houſe*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 18. not thinking it a point of Greatneſs to remit the menage of all Domeſtic Concerns to a mercenary Houſe-keeper. And indeed, ſince it has bin a faſhionable thing for the Maſter to reſign up his concerns to the Steward, and the Lady hers to the Governante, it has gon ill with moſt great Families; whilſt theſe Officers ſerve themſelves inſtead of thoſe who employ them, raiſe Fortunes on their Patrons ruins, and divide the ſpoil of the Family; the Houſe-keeper pilfering within doors, and the Bailiff plundering without. *The duty of a Wife as a Miſtreſs.*

The beſt way to be well ſerv'd, is to ſee that God be ſo.

48. Now to the well-guiding of the Houſe by the Miſtreſs of it, I know no better or more comprehenſive rule, then for her to endeavor to make all that are hers, to be Gods Servants alſo. This will ſecure her of all thoſe intermedial Qualifications in them, in which her ſecular Intereſt is concern'd, their own Conſciences being the beſt ſpy ſhe can ſet upon them as to their Truth and Fidelity, and the beſt ſpur alſo to Diligence and Induſtry. But to the making them ſuch, there will need firſt Inſtruction, and ſecondly Diſcipline. It is a neceſſary part of the Rulers care to provide that none in their Family ſhould want means of neceſſary Inſtruction. I do not ſay that the Miſtreſs ſhould ſet up for a Catechiſt or Preacher; but that they take order they ſhould be taught by thoſe that are qualified for the Emploiment. And that their furniſhing them with Knowledg, may not ſerve only to help them to a greater number of ſtripes, *Luke* 12. 47. they are to give them the opportunities of conſecrating it by Praier and Devotion, to that end to have public Divine Offices in the Family; and that not by ſtarts or accidents (when a devouter Gueſt is to be entertain'd, and laid by when a profane) but daily and regularly, that the hours of Praiers may be fix'd and conſtant as thoſe of Meals, and (if it may poſſibly be) as much frequented; however that towards it ſhe give both Precept and Example.

A family ſhould be the Epitome of a Church.

49. A Chriſtian Family ſhould be the Epitome of a Church: but alas how many among us lie under a perpetual Interdict, and yet not from the uſurpation of any Foreign Power, but from the irreligion of the Domeſtic. One may go into divers great Families, and after ſome ſtay there, not be able to ſay that the name of God was mention'd to any other purpoſe then that of Blaſphemy and Execration; nor a Text of Scripture, unleſs in Burleſque and profane Drollery. And ſure we need not wonder at the univerſal complaint that is now made of ill Servants, when we reflect upon this ill government of Families. They that are ſuffer'd wholly to forget their duties toward God, will not alwaies remember it towards Man. Servants are not ſuch Philoſophers that upon the bare ſtrength of a few Moral Inſtincts they will be vertuous: and if by a cuſtomary neglect of all things Sacred, they are once taught to look at nothing beyond this World, they will often find temtation enough here to diſcard their honeſty, as the moſt unthriving Trade. And indeed when the aw of Religion is quite taken off from the vulgar, there will ſcarce any thing elſe be found to keep them within any tolerable bounds; ſo that 'tis no leſs impolitic then profane to ſlacken that Rein.

The Governors of Families are reſponſible for the Piety of their Servants.

50. But it is not only the Intereſt, but the Duty of all that have Families, to keep up the eſteem and practice of Religion in them. 'Twas one of the greateſt Endearments of *Abraham* to God, *That he would command his houſhold to keep the way of the Lord*, *Gen.* 18. 19. And *Joſhua* undertakes no leſs for the piety of his Houſhold then himſelf, *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord*, *Joſh.* 24. 15. And ſure 'tis but reaſonable, that where we our ſelves ow an Homage, we ſhould make all our dependants acknowledg the ſame. Beſides, it is a juſtice in reſpect of them; for where we entertain a Servant, we take the whole Perſon into our care and protection, and are falſe to that undertaking, if we ſuffer his Soul, the moſt precious part of him, to periſh. And God, who keeps account even of his meaneſt Creatures, will not patiently reſent ſuch a neglect of thoſe who bear his own Image, and were ranſom'd with as great a price as their Maſters were, *for there is no reſpect of perſons with God*, *Eph.* 6. 9.

51. But

51. But when Piety is planted in a Family, 'twill ſoon wither, if it be not kept in vigor by Diſcipline: nay, indeed to have Servants ſeemingly devout in the Oratory, and yet really licentious out of it, is but to convert ones Houſe into a Theater, have a play of Religion, and keep a ſet of Actors only to perſonate and repreſent it. 'Tis therefore neceſſary to enquire how they behave themſelves when they are off the Stage; whether thoſe hands which they elevate in Praier, are at other times induſtriouſly appli'd to work; or thoſe mouths wherewith they there bleſs God, are not elſewhere fill'd with Oaths and Curſes, Scurrilities and Revilings: in a word, whether that Form of Godlineſs be not deſign'd in commutation for Sobriety and Honeſty. Indeed the Governors of Families ought to make a ſtrict Inſpection into the manners of their Servants, and where they find them good to affix ſome ſpecial mark of Favor, by which they may both be encouraged to perſevere, and others to begin; but where they find them vicious, there as eminently to diſcountenance, ſeverely to admoniſh them, and uſe all fit means for their reclaiming, and when that ſeems hopeleſs, to diſmiſs them that they may not infect the reſt. *A little leven*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *leveneth the whole lump*, *Gal.* 5. 9. and one ill ſervant (like a periſht tooth) will be apt to corrupt his fellows. 'Tis therefore the ſame in families that it is in more public communities, where ſeverity to the ill is mercy and protection to the reſt; and were houſes thus early weeded of all idle and vicious perſons, they would not be ſo overgrown, nor degenerate into ſuch rude wilderneſſes, as many (nay I fear moſt) great families now are. *The neceſſity of diſcipline in a family.*

52. But as ſervants are not to be tolerated in the neglect of their duty, ſo neither are they to be defeated of any of their dues. Maſters are to give to their Servants *that which is juſt and equal*, *Col.* 4. 1. And ſure 'tis but juſt and equal that they who are rational creatures ſhould not be treated with the rigor or contemt of brutes: a ſufficient and decent proviſion, both in ſickneſs and in health is a juſt debt to them, beſides an exact performance of thoſe particular contracts upon which they were entertain'd. *Laban* had ſo much of natural juſtice, that he would not take the advantage of *Jacob*'s relation to him to make him ſerve him gratis, *Becauſe thou art my brother, ſhouldſt thou therefore ſerve me for nought? tell me therefore what ſhall thy wages be? Gen.* 29. 15. But alas now-a-daies where Servants have bin told, nay expreſly articled for, their wages, 'tis with many no eaſy thing to get it: nay 'tis thought by ſome Maſters an inſolence, a piece of ill manners to demand it; and when they have worn out a ſervant, they either pay him not at all, or with the ſame protraction and regret, which they do their Tailors for the old Clothes they have caſt off. I fear there are many inſtances of this, eſpecially among great Perſons, it being a receiv'd Mode with too many of them to pay no Debts to thoſe who are too mean to conteſt with them. But however they may ruffle it out with Men, it will one day arraign them before God as moſt injurious Oppreſſors; there being no Crime of that kind more frequently or ſeverely branded in Scripture, then this of the detention of the Wages of the Servant and Hireling. Beſides, this example of Injuſtice, wherein the Servant is paſſive, is often tranſcrib'd by him in acts of fraud and deceit, and he is apt to think it but an equal retaliation, to break his Truſt where the Maſter breaks his Covenant; and when he once attemts to be his own Pay-maſter, 'tis not to be doubted but he will allow himſelf large Uſe for the forbearance of his Wages; ſo that the courſe is no leſs unprofitable to the Maſter, then unjuſt and diſhonorable. *Juſtice to Servants.*

How far the Wife is therein concern'd.

53. I am not ſure 'tis always in the Wives power to prevent this or any of the former faults in the menage of the Family. For her Autority being but ſubordinate, if the Husband who is ſupreme ſuſpend her Power, he do's by that vacating her rule, take off the duty conſequent to it; ſo that what I have ſaid, can be obligatory to none that are ſo impeded: but to thoſe who can either do it themſelves, or perſwade their Husbands to it, the omiſſion will be their ſin: all the profaneſs and diſorder of the Family will be charg'd upon their account, if it came by their default.

The burthen of a multitude of Servants.

54. And this, methinks, is a Conſideration that may much mortifie one uſual piece of vanity, I mean, that of a multitude of Servants. We ſhall all of us find burthen enough of our own perſonal miſcarriages, and need not contrive to fetch in more weight from others. And in Families 'tis generally obſervable, That the bigger they are, the worſe; vice gains boldneſs by numbers, is hatch'd up by the warmth of a full Society; and we daily ſee People venture upon thoſe Enormities in conſort and in a croud, which they would not dare, did they think they ſtood ſingle. Beſides, the wider the Province is, the more difficult it is well to adminiſter it; and in a heap of Servants many faults will ſcape undiſcern'd, eſpecially conſidering the common Confederacy there is uſually among them, for the eluding of Diſcipline: ſo that what the Wiſe man ſpeaks of not deſiring a multitude of unprofitable Children, I think may be very well appli'd to Servants, whoſe unprofitableneſs uſually increaſes together with their number. I have now run thro the ſeveral Obligations conſequent to the Married State, wherein even upon this very curſory View, there appears ſo many Particulars, that if they were all duly attended, Ladies need not be much at a loſs how to entertain themſelves, nor run abroad in a Romantic Queſt after Foreign Divertiſements, when they have ſuch variety of Engagements at Home.

SECT. III.

Of Widows.

The Widow is not freed from all duties to a huſband.

1. THE next ſtate which can ſucceed to that of Marriage, is Widowhood, which tho it ſuperſedes thoſe Duties which were terminated merely in the perſon of the Husband, yet it endears thoſe which may be paid to his Aſhes. *Love is ſtrong as death, Cant.* 8. 6. and therefore when it is pure and genuine, cannot be extinguiſh'd by it, but burns like the Funeral-Lamps of old even in Vaults and Charnel-houſes. The conjugal Love tranſplanted into the Grave, (as into a finer Mold) improves into Piety, and laies a kind of ſacred Obligation upon the Widow, to perform all offices of reſpect and kindneſs which his Remains are capable of.

To the body of the dead huſband by a decent interment.

2. Now thoſe Remains are of three ſorts, his Body, his Memory, and his Children. The moſt proper expreſſion of her love to the firſt, is in giving it an honorable Enterment; I mean not ſuch as may vie with the *Poland* Extravagance (of which 'tis obſerv'd, that two or three near ſucceeding Funerals ruin the Family) but prudently proportion'd to his Quality and Fortune, ſo that her Zeal to his Corps may not injure a Nobler Relict

Relict of him, His Children. And this decency is a much better inſtance of her kindneſs, then all thoſe Tragical Furies wherewith ſome Women ſeem tranſported towards their dead Husbands, thoſe frantic Embraces and careſſes of a Carcaſs, which betray a little too much the ſenſuality of their Love. And it is ſomthing obſervable, That thoſe vehement Paſſions quickly exhauſt themſelves, and by a kind of Sympathetic Efficacy, as the Body (on which their affection was fixt) molders, ſo do's that alſo; nay often it attends not thoſe leſurely degrees of diſſolution, but by a more precipitate motion, ſeems rather to vaniſh then conſume.

To the memory of the husband.

3. The more valuable Kindneſs therefore, is that to his Memory, endevoring to embalm that, keep it from periſhing; and by this innocent Magic (as the Egyptians were wont by a more guilty) ſhe may converſe with the Dead, repreſent him ſo to her own Thoughts, that his Life may ſtill be repeated to her: and as in a broken Mirror the refraction multiplies the Images, ſo by his diſſolution every hour preſents diſtinct Idea's of him; ſo that ſhe ſees him the oftner, for his being hid from her Eies. But as they uſe not to Embalm without Odors, ſo ſhe is not only to preſerve but perfume his Memory, render it as fragrant as ſhe can, not only to her ſelf, but others; by reviving the remembrance of whatever was Praiſe-worthy in him, vindicating him from all Calumnies and falſe Accuſations, and ſtifling (or allaying) even True Ones as much as ſhe can. And indeed, a Widow can no way better provide for her own Honor, then by this tenderneſs of her Husbands.

In doing nothing low or indecent.

4. Yet there is another Expreſſion of it, inferior to none of the former, and that is, the ſetting ſuch a value upon her relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it. 'Twas the dying charge of *Auguſtus* to his Wife *Livia*, *Behave thy ſelf well, and remember our Marriage*. And ſhe who has bin Wife to a Perſon of Honor, muſt ſo remember it, as not to do any thing below her ſelf, or which he (could he have foreſeen it) ſhould juſtly have bin aſham'd of.

The laſt tribute to the husband, is paid him in his Children.

5. The laſt Tribute ſhe can pay him, is in his Children. Theſe he leaves as his Proxies to receive the kindneſs of which himſelf is uncapable; ſo that the Children of a Widow may claim a double portion of the Mothers love; one upon their Native right, as hers; the other, as a bequeſt in right of their dead Father. And indeed, ſince ſhe is to ſupply the place of both Parents, 'tis but neceſſary ſhe ſhould put on the Affections of both, and to the tenderneſs of a Mother, add the care and conduct of a Father. Firſt, in a ſedulous care of their Education. And next, in the prudent managery of their Fortunes; an order that is ſomtimes unhappily inverted, and Mothers are ſo concern'd to have the Eſtate proſper in their tuition, that the Children cannot; whilſt (by an unſeaſonable Frugality) to ſave a little Expence, they deny them the advantages of an Ingenious and Gentile Breeding, ſwell their Eſtates perhaps to a vaſt Bulk, but ſo contract and narrow their Minds, that they know not how to diſpoſe them to any real benefit of themſelves, or others. And this is one of the moſt pernicious Parſimonies imaginable. A Mother by this ſeems to adopt the Fortune, and abdicate the Child, who is only made the Beaſt to bear thoſe loads of Wealth ſhe will lay on, and which ſhe evidently owns as the greateſt Treſure, ſince in tenderneſs to that ſhe neglects him.

Kindneſs is in nothing better ſhewn then in beſtowing education.

6. Yet ſomtimes the ſame Effect ſprings from another Cauſe, and Children are ill bred, not becauſe the Mother grudges the charge, but out of a Feminine fondneſs, which permits her not to part with them to

the proper places for their education. Like *Jacob* to *Benjamin*, her Soul is ſo bound up in them, that ſhe cannot lend them awhile even to their own moſt neceſſary concerns. And this, tho not ſo ignoble a motive as the other, is of no leſs miſchief, at leaſt to her Sons, who being by it confin'd to home, are conſequently condemn'd to be poyſon'd (if with nothing elſe, yet) with the flatteries of Servants and Tenants, who think thoſe the beſt expedient to ſecure their own ſtation. And with theſe the young Maſter or Landlord is ſo blown up, that as if his Manors were the confines of the World, he can look at nothing beyond them; ſo that when at laſt he breaks looſe from his Mothers arms, and comes abroad, he expects ſcarce to find his Equals, much leſs his Betters; thinks he is ſtill to receive the ſame fawning Adorations which he was us'd to at home: and being poſſeſt with this inſolent expectation, he will ſcarce be undeceiv'd, but at the price of many Affronts, nay, perhaps he may buy his experience with the loſs of his life; by his ill manners draw on a Quarrel, wherein he finally periſhes. That this is no impoſſible Suppoſition, ſome unhappy Mothers have found to their unſpeakable affliction.

Education abroad more advantageous then at home.

7. 'Tis not to be denied, but there are alſo dangers conſequent to the breeding Children abroad, Vice having inſinuated it ſelf even into the places of Erudition, and having not only as many, but the very ſame Academies with Vertue and Learning; ſo that the extreme depravation of the times new ſtates the Queſtion, and we are not to conſider which is beſt, but which is the leaſt ill diſpoſure of Children. And in that competition ſure the home Education will be caſt; for there they may ſuck in all the Venom, and nothing of the Antidote; they will not only be taught baſe things, but (as I before obſerv'd) by the baſeſt Tutors, ſuch as will add all the moſt ſordid circumſtances to the improving of a Crime; whereas abroad they are firſt not like to meet with any whoſe intereſt it is ſo much to make them Vicious. And ſecondly, they may (as ill as the world is) meet with many who may give them both Precepts and Examples of a better kind. Beſides the Diſcipline uſed in thoſe Communities makes them know themſelves; and the various ſorts of Learning they may acquire, will not only prove uſeful divertiſement (the want of which is the great ſpring of miſchief) but will, if rightly apply'd, furniſh them with Ingenious and Vertuous Principles, ſuch as may ſet them above all vile and ignoble practices. So that there ſeems a conſpiration of motives to wreſt the child from the reluctting Mother, and to perſwade her for a while to deny her ſelf that deſire of her eies, that ſo he may at laſt anſwer the more rational deſire of her heart.

Kindneſs to Children ſhewn in managing their Fortune.

8. As to the other part of her Obligation, the managing of their Fortune, there is the ſame rule for her as for all other perſons that have a Truſt, *viz.* to do as for themſelves; that is, with the ſame care and diligence (if not a greater) as in her own peculiar Concern. I do not ſay that ſhe ſhall confound the property, and make it indeed her own, by applying it to her particular uſe: a thing I fear which is too often done, eſpecially by the gaier ſort of widows, who to keep up their own Equipage, do ſomtimes incroach upon their ſons peculiar. And I wiſh even that (tho bad enough) were the only caſe wherein it were done: but 'tis ſomtimes to make her a better prize to a ſecond husband. She goes into another family, and as if ſhe were a Colony ſent out by her ſon, he muſt pay for the planting her there: indeed the oft repeating this injury, has advanc'd it now into a cuſtom, and the management of the Minors eſtate is reckon'd on as part of the Widows fortune. But I confeſs I ſee not what

what there is in the title of a Mother, that can legitimate her defrauding her Child; it rather envenoms the crime and adds Unnaturalneſs to Deceit. Beſides 'tis a prepoſterous ſort of guilt. Orphans and Widows are in Scripture link'd together as objects of Gods and good mens pity, and of ill mens oppreſſion, and how ill alas do's civil war look among fellow-ſufferers? The Widow to injure the Orphan is like that uncouth oppreſſion *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* 28. 3. *A poor man that oppreſſeth the poor, is like a ſweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such kind of rapines are as exceſſive in their degree, as prodigious in their kind: and I believe there are many inſtances of ſons, who have ſuffer'd more by the Guardianſhip of their Mothers, then they could probably have done by the outrage of ſtrangers.

9. How well ſuch Mothers anſwer their Obligations to their dead Huſbands, I muſt leave it to their own Conſciences to diſcuſs, I ſhall only offer them theſe ſteps of gradation by which to proceed. Firſt that Injuſtice of any ſort is a great ſin, ſecondly that when 'tis in a matter of truſt 'tis complicated with Treachery alſo, thirdly that of all truſts thoſe to the dead have alwaies bin eſteem'd the moſt ſacred: if they can find any allay to theſe by the two remaining circumſtances, that 'tis the truſt of a husband, and the intereſt of a child, I ſhall confeſs them very ſubtil Caſuiſts. *Failence herein is an injuſtice moſt highly aggravated.*

10. I have hitherto ſpoke of what the widow ows to her dead husband; but there is alſo ſomwhat of peculiar Obligation in relation to her ſelf. God who has plac'd us in this World to purſue the intereſts of a better, directs all the ſignal acts of his Providence to that end, and intends we ſhould ſo interpret them. So that every great change that occurs, is deſign'd either to recal us from a wrong way, or to quicken our pace in the right; and a widow may more then conjecture, that when God takes away the mate of her boſom, reduces her to a ſolitude, he do's by it ſound a retreat from the lighter jollities and gaieties of the world. And as in compliance with civil cuſtom ſhe immures her ſelf, ſits in darkneſs for a while; ſo ſhe ſhould put on a more retir'd temper of mind, a more ſtrict and ſevere behavior, and that not to be caſt off with her veil, but to be the conſtant dreſs of her Widowhood. Indeed that State as it requires a great ſobriety and piety, ſo it affords many advantages towards it. The Apoſtle tells us, *that ſhe who is married careth for the things of the World, how ſhe may pleaſe her husband*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 34. There are many things which are but the due compliances of a Wife, which yet are great avocations, and interrupters of a ſtrict Devotion; when ſhe is manummitted from that ſubjection, when ſhe has leſs of *Martha's care of ſerving*, ſhe is then at liberty to choſe *Mary's part*, *Luke* 10. 42. She has her time and her fortune at her own command, and conſequently may much more abound in the works both of Piety and Charity. We find God himſelf retrencht the Wives power of binding her own ſoul *Numb.* 30. Her vows were totally inſignificant without her husbands confirmation; but the Widow might devote her ſelf to what degree ſhe pleas'd, her piety has no reſtraint from any other inconſiſtent obligation, but may ſwell as high as it can. Thoſe hours which were before her husbands right, ſeem now to devolve on God the grand proprietor of our time: that diſcourſe and free converſe wherewith ſhe entertain'd him, ſhe may now convert into colloquies and ſpiritual entercourſe with her maker; and that love which was only human before, by the change of its object acquires a ſublimity, is exalted into divine, from loial duty and conjugal affection becomes the eternal *The duty of the Widow in reſpect of her ſelf, a vacancy to Piety.*

work

work and happineſs of Angels, the ardor of a Cherubim. Thus may ſhe in a higher ſenſe verify *Samſon*'s riddle *Judges* 14. 14. *fetch hony out of a carcaſs*, make her husbands Aſhes (like thoſe of the heifer under the law *Heb.* 9. 13.) *her Purification:* his corruption may help to put on incorruption, and her loſs of a temporary comfort may inſtate her in an eternal.

To dedicate as her ſelf, ſo her fortune.

11. And as her ſelf, ſo her fortune may alſo be conſecrated: And indeed if ſhe be, that will alſo: If ſhe have made an eſcape out of *Egypt*, there ſhall not a hoof be left behind her, *Exod.* 10. 26. no part of her poſſeſſions will be aſſign'd to vanity and exceſs. She who hath really devoted her ſelf to Piety, *faſted and praied* with *Anna Luke* 2. 37. will alſo be *full of good works and alms-deeds* with *Tabitha*, *Acts* 9. 36. Thus ſhe may be a mother when ſhe ceaſes to bear; and tho ſhe no more encreaſe one family, ſhe may ſupport many: And certainly the fertility of the womb, is not ſo valuable as this of the bowels: Fruitfulneſs can be but a happineſs, Compaſſion is a vertue. Nay indeed 'tis a greater and more certain happineſs: a child is not brought forth but with pangs and anguiſh, but a work of Mercy is produc'd not only with eaſe, but delight. Beſides, ſhe that bears a Child, knows not whether it may prove a Bleſſing or a Curſe; but Charity gives certain title to a Bleſſing, and engages the moſt ſolvent Paymaſter, even God himſelf, who owns all ſuch diſburſments as a loan to him. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, *Prov.* 19. 17.

The ancient charity of Widows.

12. There was in the Primitive Times an Eccleſiaſtical Order of Widows, which St. *Paul* mentions, 1 *Tim.* 5. whoſe whole Miniſtry was devoted to Charity. Thev were indeed of the poorer ſort, fit rather to receive then give Alms; yet the leſs they could do with their Purſes, the more was requir'd of their Perſons, the humbler offices of *waſhing the Saints feet*, the careful task of *bringing up children*, and a diligent *attendance on every good work*. And ſure there is parity of Reaſon, that thoſe who upon the ſcore of their Wealth, exemt themſelves from thoſe Laborious Services, ſhould commute for it by more Liberal Alms. In the warmth and zeal of Chriſtianity, Women of the higheſt Quality performed both ſorts of Charity, forgot their Greatneſs in their condeſcenſions, yet aſſum'd it again in their Bounty; founded Hoſpitals, and yet with a *labor of love*, as the Apoſtle ſtiles it, *Heb.* 6. 10. diſdain'd not ſomtimes to ſerve in them. But theſe are Examples not like to be tranſcrib'd in our daies, Greatneſs is now grown to ſuch an unweildineſs that it cannot ſtoop tho to the moſt Chriſtian Offices, and yet can as little ſoar up in any Munificent Charities: it ſtands like *Nebuchadnezzars* Golden Image, a vaſt Bulk only to be ador'd.

The great advantages that Dowagers of great families and fortunes have to charities.

13. Now certainly, if any Women be qualified to avert this reproch, it muſt be the Dowagers of great Families and Fortunes: they have none to controul their Viſits to the ſick and afflicted, or to reſent a diſparagement from their Humility, neither have they an account to give of their Poſſeſſions but God and themſelves; to him ſure they can bring none ſo like to procure them the Eulogy of *well done thou good and faithful ſervant*, Matth 25. 21. as a Catalogue of their Alms. Nor indeed can they any other way diſpoſe their Fortune ſo much to their own contentment; they may poſſibly cloy and ſatiate their ſenſes, make proviſion for the fleſh; but that no way ſatisfies their reaſon, much leſs their Conſcience. The Soul, which is the ſuperior part, is quite left out

out in that diſtribution; nothing is communicated to it but the guilt of thoſe dear bought Exceſſes. The only way it has to be a ſharer in their Wealth, is by a charitable diſpenſing. The Poor are its Proxies as well as Gods, and tho in all other reſpects we may ſay to the Soul, as the *Pſalmiſt* do's to God, *Pſal.* 16. 2. *my goods extend not to thee:* yet by this way, it becomes not only a partaker, but the chief proprietor, and all is laid out for its uſe. The harboring an out-caſt, builds it *an everlaſting habitation*, *Luke* 16. 9. the clothing the naked, arrays it in *pure white linen*, *Rev.* 19. 8. and the feeding the hungry, makes it a gueſt *at the ſupper of the Lamb*, v. 9. Nay, it gains not only an indefeiſible title to theſe happy Reverſions, but it has a great deal in preſent poſſeſſion, a huge rational Complacence in the right applying of Wealth, and doing that with it for which 'twas deſign'd; yet more, it gives a ſenſitive delight, nothing being more agreeable to human nature, then the doing good to its own kind. A ſeaſonable Alms leaves a greater exultation and tranſport in the Giver, then it can ordinarily raiſe in the Receiver; ſo exemplifying the Maxim of our Bleſſed Lord, that it is a *more bleſſed thing to give then to receive*, *Acts* 20. 35. This indeed is a way to elude the ſevere denunciation of the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 5. 6. *A widow that liveth in this pleſure, is not dead whilſt ſhe liveth*; but on the contrary, ſhall live when ſhe dies; when ſhe reſigns her Breath, ſhall improve her being: the Praiers of the Poor, like a benign gale, ſhall aſſiſt her flight to the Region of Bliſs; and ſhe who has here cheriſh'd the afflicted Members, ſhall there be indiſſolubly united to their Glorious Head.

14. And now methinks Widowhood, under this aſpect, is quite tranſform'd, is not ſo forlorn, ſo deſolate an eſtate as 'tis uſually eſteem'd. And would all Widows uſe but this expedient, thus devote themſelves to Piety and Charity, it would, like the healing Tree, *Exod.* 15. 25. ſweeten theſe Waters of *Marah*, render the condition not only ſupportable, but pleſant; and they would not need to make ſuch affrighted, ſuch diſadvantageous eſcapes, as many do, from it. 'Tis true, the Apoſtles affirmation is unqueſtionable, that *the wife, when her husband is dead, is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 39. But the advice he ſubjoins is authentic too, *ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide*. She that may ſolace her ſelf in the Society, in the Love of her God, makes an ignoble deſcent to Human Embraces; ſhe that may purchaſe Heaven with her Wealth, buys a very dear Bargain of the beſt Husband on Earth. Nay indeed, upon a mere ſecular account, it ſeems not very prudent to relinquiſh both Liberty and Property, to eſpouſe at the beſt a Subjection, but perhaps a Slavery: it a little reſembles the mad Frolicks of freed Gally-ſlaves, who play away their Liberty as ſoon as they regain it.

The ſe advantages redeem Widowhood from being a forlorn eſtate.

15. Marriage is ſo great an adventure, that once ſeems enough for the whole life: for whether they have bin proſperous or adverſe in the firſt, it do's almoſt diſcourage a ſecond attemt. She that has had a good Husband, may be ſuppos'd to have his Idea ſo fixt in her Heart, that it will be hard to introduce any new Form: nay farther, ſhe may very reaſonably doubt, that in this common dearth of Vertue, two good Husbands will ſcarce fall to one Womans ſhare, and an ill one will become more intolerable to her, by the reflections ſhe will be apt to make on the better. On the other ſide, if ſhe have had a bad, the ſmart ſure cannot but remain after the rod is taken off; the memory of what ſhe has ſuffer'd ſhould, methinks, be a competent caution againſt new ad-

Of ſecond Marriage.

ventures. Yet experience ſhews us that women (tho the weaker ſex) have commonly fortitude enough to encounter and baffle all theſe conſiderations. It is not therefore to be expected that many will by any thing that hath or can be ſaid be diverted from remarrying: and indeed ſhe that do's not preſerve her Widowhood upon the accounts forementionʼd, may perhaps better relinquiſh it. St. *Paul* we ſee adviſes that thoſe *Widows* who found no better emploiment *then going from houſe to houſe*, that grew by their vacancy to *be tatlers and buſy-bodies* 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. ſhould marry again; it being the beſt way to fix theſe wandring planets, to find them buſineſs of their own at home, that ſo they may not ramble abroad to intermedle with that of others. And the truth is they that cannot brook the retiredneſs and gravity which becomes a Widow, had better put themſelves in a ſtate that leſs requires it; and if they reſolve not to conform their minds to their condition, to bring their condition to their minds; but in the doing that there will be ſome cautions very neceſſary to be obſervʼd. I ſhall reduce them to two, the one relating to the time, the other to the equality of the match.

A decency in point of time to be obſervʼd.

16. Firſt in reſpect of time, common decency requires that there be a conſiderable interval between the parting with one husband and the chooſing another. This has bin ſo much obſervʼd by Nations that were at all civiliz'd, that we find *Numa* made it a law, that no Widow ſhould marry under ten months, and if any did ſhe was to ſacrifice as for the expiation of a crime. And this continued in force many ages after, inſomuch that when upon reaſons of State *Auguſtus* found it uſeful to marry his ſiſter *Octavia* to *Antonius*, nothing leſs then a decree of the Senate could licenſe the anticipating the time; ſo jealous obſervers were they of this point of Civility, that they thought the whole State was concernʼd in the violation. 'Tis true we have no law in the caſe, but we have ſomwhat of cuſtom, I know not how long we ſhall have, ſince the frequent breaches of it threaten quite to cancel it: yet a Woman that is tender of her honor will ſcarce give her example towards the reſcinding it. The wounds of grief are ſeldom healʼd by any hand but that of time, and therefore too ſudden a cure ſhews the hurt pierc'd not deep; and ſhe that can make her mourning veil an optic to draw a new lover nearer to her ſight, gives cauſe to ſuſpect the ſables were all without.

So alſo the equality of condition.

17. The next thing conſiderable is the equality of the match. Marriage is ſo cloſe a link, that to have it eaſy 'tis good to have the parties as even proportionʼd as may be. And firſt in reſpect of quality and fortune, 'tis to be wiſht there ſhould be no eminent diſproportion. Thoſe that meet moſt upon a level, are leaſt ſubject to thoſe upbraidings that often attend a great deſcent of either party. It is therefore no prudent motive, by which ſome Widows are ſwaiʼd, who marry only for a great Title; who often do not meet with ſo much of obeiſance from ſtrangers, as they do with contemt from their husbands and his relations. There have bin many examples of Lords, who have uſed rich, but inferior, widows like ſpunges, ſqueezʼd them to fill themſelves with their wealth, and them only with the air of a big name. On the other ſide for a woman to marry very meanly and too much below her ſelf, is rather worſe; thoſe kind of matches are ordinarily made in a tranſport of paſſion, and when that abates and leaves her to ſober reflections, ſhe will probably be ſo angry with her ſelf, that ſhe will ſcarce be well pleasʼd with her husband. A ſtate of ſubjection is a little ſweetned by the worth and dignity of the ruler: for as it is more honorable, ſo 'tis alſo more eaſy, the ſerviler ſpirits

rits being of all others the moſt imperious in command. And ſure 'twill not a little grate a woman of honor, to think ſhe has made ſuch a one her Maſter, who perhaps would before have thought it a preferment to have bin her ſervant. Nay farther, ſuch marriages have commonly an ill reflection on the modeſty of the Woman, it being uſually preſum'd that where the diſtance was ſo great, as to diſcourage ſuch an attemt on his part, there was ſome invitation on hers. So that upon all accounts ſhe is very forlorn who thus diſpoſes of her ſelf. Yet 'tis too well known ſuch matches have oft bin made, and the ſame levity and inconſideration may betray others to it; and therefore 'tis their concern well to ballaſt their minds and to provide that their Paſſion never get the aſcendant over their Reaſon.

As alſo equality of judgment in Religion.

18. Another very neceſſary equality is that of their judgment as to Religion. I do not mean that they are to catechize each other as to every minute ſpeculative point; but that they be of the ſame profeſſion, ſo as to join together in the worſhip of God. It is ſure very uncomfortable that thoſe who have ſo cloſely combin'd all their other intereſts, ſhould be diſunited in the greateſt; that one Church cannot hold them, whom one houſe, one bed do's; and that religion which is in it ſelf the moſt uniting thing, ſhould be the only diſagreement between them. I know 'tis oft made a compact in ſuch matches, that neither ſhall impoſe their opinion upon the other: yet I doubt 'tis ſeldom kept, unleſs it be by thoſe whoſe careleſneſs of all religion abates their zeal to any one. But where they have any earneſtneſs in their way, eſpecially where one party thinks the other in a damnable error, 'twill ſcarce be poſſible to refrain endeavoring to reduce them; and that endeavor begets diſputes, thoſe diſputes heats, thoſe heats diſguſts, and thoſe diſguſts perhaps end in averſion; ſo that at laſt their affections grow as unreconcilable as their opinions, and their religious jars draw on domeſtic. Beſides if none of theſe perſonal debates happen, yet the education of the children will be matter of diſpute; the one parent will ſtill be countermining the other, each ſeeking to recover the others proſelytes. Nay it introduces faction into the inferior parts of the family too: the ſervants according to their different perſwaſions bandy into leagues and parties; ſo that it endangers, if not utterly deſtroies all concord in families: and all this train of miſchiefs ſhould methinks be a competent prejudice againſt ſuch matches.

Alſo equality in years.

19. There is yet a third particular wherein any great diſproportion is much to be avoided, and that is in Years. The humors of youth and age differ ſo widely, that there had need be a great deal of skill to compoſe the diſcord into a harmony. When a young Woman marries an old man, there are commonly jealouſies on the one part and loathings on the other, and if there be not an eminent degree of diſcretion in one or both, there will be perpetual diſagreements. But this is a caſe that do's not often happen among thoſe I now ſpeak to: for tho the avarice of Parents ſomtimes forces maids upon ſuch matches, yet Widows who are their own chooſers ſeldom make ſuch elections. The inequality among them commonly falls on the other ſide, and old women marry young men. Indeed any marriage is in ſuch a folly and dotage. They who muſt ſuddenly make their beds in the duſt, what ſhould they think of a nuptial couch? And to ſuch the anſwer of the Philoſopher is appoſite, who being demanded what was the fitteſt time for marrying, replied, for the young not yet, for the old not at all.

The accumulated absurdities of disproportioned marr age.

20. But this dotage becomes perfect frenzy and madneſs when they chooſe young husbands: this is an accumulation of abſurdities and contradictions. The Husband and the Wife are but one perſon; and yet at once young and old, freſh and wither'd. 'Tis a reverſing the decrees of nature: and therefore 'twas no ill anſwer which *Dionyſius* the Tyrant gave his Mother, who in her age deſign'd ſuch a match, That tho by his regal power he could diſpence with poſitive laws, yet he could not abrogate thoſe of nature, or make it fit for her an old Woman to marry a young Man. 'Tis indeed an inverſion of ſeaſons, a confounding the Kalender, making a mungrel month of *May* and *December*: and the conjunction proves as fatal as it is prodigious; it being ſcarce ever ſeen that ſuch a match proves tolerably happy. And indeed 'tis not imaginable how it ſhould; for firſt 'tis to be preſum'd ſhe that marries ſo muſt marry meanly, no young man who do's not need her fortune will take her perſon. For tho ſome have the humor to give great rates for inanimate antiquities, yet none will take the living gratis. Next ſhe never miſſes to be hated by him ſhe marries: he looks on her as his rack and torment, thinks himſelf under the lingring torture devis'd by *Mezentius*, a living body tied to a dead. Nor muſt ſhe think to cure this by any the little adulteries of art: ſhe may buy beauty, and yet can never make it her own; may paint, yet never be fair. 'Tis like enameling a mud-wall, the courſneſs of the ground will ſpoil the varniſh; and the greateſt exquiſitneſs of dreſs ſerves but to illuſtrate her native blemiſhes. So that all ſhe gains by this is to make him ſcorn as well as abhor her.

And no leſs miſeries attending it.

21. Indeed there is nothing can be more ridiculous, then an old Woman gaily ſet out; and it was not unaptly ſaid of *Diogenes* to ſuch a one, If this decking be for the living, you are deceiv'd; if for the dead, make haſt to them: and I doubt many young husbands will be ready to ſay as much. Nay becauſe death comes not quick enough to part them, there is few have patience to attend its loitering pace: the man bids adieu to the Wife tho not to her fortune, takes that to maintain his luxuries elſewhere, allows her ſome little annuity, and makes her a penſioner to her own eſtate. So that he has his deſign, but ſhe none of hers: he married for her fortune, and he has it; ſhe for his perſon, and has it not: and which is worſe buies her defeat with the loſs of all, he commonly leaving her as emty of mony as he found her of wit.

Which yet are unpittied.

22. And truly this is a condition deplorable enough, and yet uſually fails even of that comfort which is the laſt reſerve of the miſerable, I mean Pity. 'Tis the Wiſe man's queſtion, *Eccleſ.* 12. 13. *Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a Serpent?* He might have preſum'd leſs on his skill, and kept himſelf at a ſafer diſtance: and ſure the like may be ſaid of her. Alas what are her feeble charms, that ſhe ſhould expect by them to fix the giddy appetites of youth? And ſince ſhe could ſo preſume without ſenſe, none will regret that ſhe ſhould be convinc'd by ſmart. Beſides, this is a caſe wherein there have bin a multitude of unhappy Preſidents which might have caution'd her. He that accidentally falls down an undiſcover'd precipice is compaſſionated for his diſaſter; but he that ſtands a great while on the brink of it, looks down and ſees the bottom ſtrew'd with the mangled carcaſſes of many that have thence fallen; if he ſhall deliberately caſt himſelf into their company, the blame quite extinguiſhes the pity; he may aſtoniſh, but not melt the beholders. And truly ſhe who caſts her ſelf away in ſuch a match, betraies not leſs, but more wilfulneſs. How many ruins of unhappy women

men preſent themſelves to her, like the wracks of old veſſels, all ſplit upon this rock? And if ſhe will needs ſteer her courſe purpoſely to do the ſame, none ought to grudg her the ſhipwrack ſhe ſo courts.

23. Nor has ſhe only this negative diſcomfort to be depriv'd of pity, but ſhe is loaded with cenſures and reproch. The World is apt enough to malicious errors, to fix blame where there is none, but 'tis ſeldom guilty of the charitative, do's not overlook the ſmalleſt appearance of evil, but generally puts the worſt conſtruction on any act, that it will with any probability bear; and according to that meſure women in this condition can expect no very mild deſcants on them. Indeed ſuch matches are ſo deſtitute of any rational Plea, that 'tis hard to derive them from any other motive then the ſenſitive. What the common conjectures are in that caſe, is as needleſs as it is unhandſom to declare: I will not ſay how true they are, but if they be, it adds another reaſon to the former, why ſuch Marriages are ſo improſperous. All diſtortions in Nature are uſually ominous; and ſure ſuch preternatural heats in Age, may very well be reckon'd as diſmal Preſages, and very certain ones too, ſince they create the ruin they foretell. And truly 'tis not only juſt, but convenient, that ſuch Motives ſhould be attended with ſuch Conſequences; that the Bitterneſs of the one, may occaſion ſome reflexion on the Sordidneſs of the other. 'Tis but kindly, that ſuch an Alhallontide Spring ſhould meet with Froſts, and the unpleſantneſs of the Event chaſtiſe the uglineſs of the Deſign; and therefore I think thoſe that are conſcious of the one, ſhould be ſo far from murmuring, that they ſhould be very thankful for the other: think it Gods diſcipline to bring them again to their Wits, and not repine at that ſmart which themſelves have made neceſſary.

And loaded with cenſure and reproch.

24. And now I wiſh all the Ancienter Widows, would ſeriouſly weigh how much 'tis their Intereſt not to ſever thoſe two Epithets; that of Ancient they cannot put off, it daily grows upon them; and that of Widow is ſure a more proportionable adjunct to it, then that of Wife; eſpecially when it is to one to whom her Age might have made her Mother. There is a Veneration due to Age, if it be ſuch as diſowns not it ſelf: *The hoary head*, ſays *Solomon*, *is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſs*, *Prov.* 16. 32. but when it will mix it ſelf with Youth, it is diſclaim'd by both, becomes the ſhame of the Old, and the ſcorn of the Young. What a ſtrange fury is it then which poſſeſſes ſuch Women, that when they may diſpoſe their Fortunes to thoſe Advantageous Deſigns before mention'd, they ſhould only buy with them, ſo undecent, ſo ridiculous a ſlavery? that when they may keep up the reputation of Modeſty and Prudence, they ſhould expoſe themſelves to an Univerſal Contemt for the want of both; and that they who might have had a Reverence, put themſelves even out of the capacity of bare Compaſſion.

A ſtrange fury in women when their eſtates might be emploied to the beſt uſes of Charity, only buy with them ſlavery and beggary.

25. This is ſo high a Frenzy, as ſure cannot happen in an inſtant; it muſt have ſome preparatory degrees, ſome rooting in the conſtitution and habit of the mind: Such Widows have ſure ſome lightneſs of humor, before they can be ſo giddy in their Brains, and therefore theſe that will ſecure themſelves from the Effect, muſt ſubſtract the Cauſe; if they will ſtill be wiſhing themſelves young, 'tis odds but within a while they will perſuade themſelves they are ſo. Let them therefore content themſelves to be old, and as Faſhions are varied with Times, ſo let them put on the Ornaments proper to their Seaſon; which are Piety, Gravity, and Prudence. Theſe will be not only their Ornament, but their Armor too;

This misfortune is generally founded in affectation of youth and gaiety.

this will gain them ſuch a Reverence, that will make it as improbable they ſhould be aſſaulted, as impoſſible they ſhould aſſault. For I think one may ſafely ſay, It is the want of one or all of thoſe, which betraies Women to ſuch Marriages.

And will be matter of caution to younger Widows.

26. And indeed it may be a matter of Caution, even to the younger Widows, not to let themſelves too much looſe to a light frolick Humor, which perhaps they will not be able to put off, when it is moſt neceſſary they ſhould. It will not much invite a ſober Man to marry them while they are young; and if it continue with them till they are old, it may (as Natural Motions uſe) grow more violent toward its end: precipitate them into that ruinous Folly we have before conſider'd. Yet, ſhould they happen to eſcape that, ſhould it not force them from their Widow-hood, it will ſure very ill agree with it: for how prepoſterous is it for an Old Woman to delight in Gauds and Trifles, ſuch as were fitter to entertain her Grand-children? to read Romances with ſpectacles, and be at Masks and Dancings, when ſhe is fit only to act the Antics? Theſe are contradictions to Nature, the tearing off her Marks, and where ſhe has writ fifty or ſixty, to leſſen (beyond the proportion of the unjuſt Steward) and write ſixteen. And thoſe who thus manage their Widow-hood, have more reaſon to bewail it at laſt then at firſt, as having more experimentally found the miſchief of being left to their own Guidance. It will therefore concern them all to put themſelves under a ſafer Conduct, by an aſſiduous Devotion to render themſelves up to the leading of the one infallible Guide, who, if he be not a *covering of the eyes*, *Gen.* 20. 16. to preclude all ſecond Choices, may yet be *a light to them* for diſcerning who are fit to be choſen; that if they ſee fit to uſe their liberty and Marry, they may yet take the Apoſtles reſtriction with it, 1 *Cor.* 7. 40. that *it be only in the Lord.* Upon ſuch ſober Motives, and with ſuch due Circumſtances as may approve it to Him, and render it capable of his Benediction.

The Cloſe.

The beſt means to ſecure in any of the before-mention'd particular eſtates, is to be furniſht with the general vertues.

1. I HAVE now gone thro both Parts of the propos'd Method. The former has preſented thoſe Qualifications which are equally neceſſary to every Woman: Theſe, as a Root, ſend ſap and vigour to the diſtinct Branches, animate and impregnate the ſeveral ſucceſſive States thro which ſhe is to paſs. He that hath pure Ore or Bullion, may caſt it into what Form beſt fits his uſe, nay may tranſlate it from one to another; and ſhe who has that Mine of Vertues, may furnish out any Condition; her being good in an abſolute conſideration, will certainly make her ſo in a relative. On the other ſide, she who has not ſuch a Stock, cannot keep up the Honor of any State; like corrupted Liquor, emty it from one Veſſel to another, it ſtill infects and contaminates all. And this is the cauſe that Women are alike complain'd of under all Forms, becauſe ſo many want this Fundamental Vertue: were there more good Women, there would be more modeſt Virgins, loyal and obedient Wives, and ſober Widows.

2. I muſt

2. I must therefore intreat those who will look on this Tract, not only to single out that part which bears their own Inscription, but that they think themselves no less concern'd in that which relates indefinitly to their Sex; endeavor to possess themselves of those Excellencies, which should be as universal as their Kind: and when they are so stor'd with Matter, they may leave Providence to diversifie the Shape, and to assign them their Scene of Action. *Therefore the Readers of this Tract are not to content themselves with what refers to their condition.*

3. And now, would God it were as easie to persuade, as it is to propose; and that this Discourse may not be taken only as a Gazet for its newness, and discarded as soon as read; but that it may at least advance to the honor of an Almanack, be allowed one Year ere it be out of date: and in that time, if frequently and seriously consulted, it may perhaps awaken some Ladies from their stupid Dreams, convince them that they were sent into the World for nobler purposes, then only to make a little Glittering in it; like a Comet, to give a blaze, and then disappear. And truly, if it may Operate but so far as to give them an effective sense of that, I shall think it has done them a considerable Service. They may, I am sure, from that Principle, deduce all necessary Consequences, and I wish they would but take the pains to draw the Corollaries; for those Inductions they make to themselves, would be much more efficacious then those which are drawn to their hands. Propriety is a great endearment, we love to be Proselytes to our selves; and People oft resist others Reasons, who would upon mere partiality pay reverence to their own. *Nor barely with what they read, but draw out consequences for themselves.*

4. But besides this, there would be another Advantage, if they could be but got to a custom of considering, by it they might insensibly undermine the grand Instrument of their ruin. That careless incogitancy, so remarkably frequent among all, and not least among Persons of Quality, is the source of innumerable Mischiefs; 'tis the *Delilah*, that at once lulls and betrays them; it keeps them in a perpetual Sleep, binds up their Faculties, so that, tho they are not extinct, yet they become useless. *Plato* used to say, *That a man asleep was good for nothing:* and 'tis certainly no less true of this Moral drousiness then the Natural. And as in Sleep the fancy only is in motion, so these inconsiderate Persons, do rather dream then discourse, entertain little trifling Images of things, which are presented by their Senses, but know not how to converse with their Reason. So that in this drousy state, all temtations come on them with the same advantage, with that of *a thief in the night*; a Phrase by which the Scripture expresses the most inevitable unforeseen danger, 1 *Thes.* 5. 2. We read in *Judges*, how easily *Laish* became a prey to a handful of Men, merely because of this supine negligent humor of the Inhabitants, which had cut them off from all entercourse with any who might have succor'd them, *Judges* 18. 27, 28. and certainly it gives no less opportunity to our Spiritual Assailants, leaves us naked and unguarded to receive all their Impressions. How prodigious a thing is it then, that this state of dulness and danger should be affectedly chosen? yet we see it too often is, even by those whose Qualities and Education fit them for more Ingenious Elections; nay, which is yet more riddle, that very aptness disenables, sets them above what it prepares them for. Labor is lookt on as utterly incompatible with Greatness, and Consideration is lookt on as a labor of the mind; and there are some Ladies, who seem to reckon it as their Prerogative, to be exemted from both; will no more apply their Understandings to any serious Discussion, then their Hands to the Spindle and Distaff; the one they think pedantic, as the other is mean. In the mean time, *Which will give the collateral advantage of using the mind to consider.*

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by what ſtrange meſures do they proceed? They look on Idiots as the moſt deplorable of Creatures, becauſe they want reaſon, and yet make it their own excellence and preeminence, to want the uſe of it; which is indeed ſo much worſe then to want the thing, as ſloth is worſe then poverty, a moral defect then a natural. But we may ſee by this, how much civil and ſacred Eſtimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as more noble too, *Acts* 17. 11. becauſe they attentively *conſider'd*, and ſtrictly examin'd the *Doctrine preach'd to them.* By which they may diſcern, that in Gods Court of Honor, a ſtupid Oſcitancy is no ennobling Quality, however it comes to be thought ſo in theirs.

Conſideration would ſecure innocence.

5. And if this one point might be gain'd, if they would but ſo far actuate their Reaſon, as deliberately and duly to weigh their Intereſt, they would find that ſo ſtrictly engaging them to all that is Vertuous, that they muſt have a very invincible reſolution for ruin, if that cannot perſwade them: and I hope all women are not Medea's, whom the Poet brings in avowing the horridneſs of that fact, which yet ſhe reſolv'd to execute. They are generally rather timorous, and apt to ſtart at the apprehenſion of danger; let them but ſee a ſerpent tho at a great diſtance, they will need no homilies or lectures to be perſwaded to fly it. And ſure did they but clearly diſcern what a ſting there is in thoſe vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold; put them in ſuch a trembling, as would like that of *Belſhazzars*, ſlacken their joints, and make thoſe things drop from them, which before they moſt tenaciouſly graſped. For indeed in ſin there is a conſpiration of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, ſo that one may give its compendium by the very reverſe of that which the Apoſtle gives of Godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. for as the one *has the promiſes*, ſo the other has the curſes *of this life*, *and of that which is to come.*

Would aſſiſt conſcience in doing its work.

6. In this life every deprav'd act (much more habit) has a black ſhadow attending it; it caſts one inward upon the conſcience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. 'Tis true indeed ſome have the art to diſguiſe that to themſelves by caſting a yet darker over it; ſuppreſſing all thoſe reluctings by an induſtrious ſtupefaction; making their ſouls ſo perfect night, that they cannot ſee thoſe black images their Conſciences repreſent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched; ſo neither can they blind others tho they do themſelves. Vice caſts a dark ſhadow outwards too, not ſuch as may conceal but betray its ſelf; and as the evening ſhadows increaſe in dimenſion, grow to a monſtroſity and diſproportion; ſo the longer any ill habit is continued, the more viſible, the more deform'd it appears, draws more obſervation and more cenſure.

Would ſhew the wretched conſequents of vice.

7. 'Twere indeed endleſs to reckon up the temporal evils to which it expoſes its votaries; Immodeſty deſtroies their fame, a vain Prodigality their fortune, Anger makes them mad, Pride hateful, Levity renders them deſpis'd, Obſtinacy deſperate, and Irreligion is a complication of all theſe, fills up their meſure both of guilt and wretchedneſs. So that had Vertue no other advocate, her very Antagoniſt would plead for her: the miſerable conſequences of vice, would like the flames of *Sodom* ſend all conſidering perſons to that little *Zoar*, which how deſpicable ſoever it may have appear'd before, cannot but look invitingly when ſafety is inſcrib'd on its gates.

The future account in another world.

8. But it muſt infinitly more do ſo if they pleaſe to open a viſto into the other World, make uſe of divine perſpectives to diſcern thoſe diſtant objects

objects which their groſſer ſenſes do here intercept. There they may ſee the diſmal Cataſtrophe of their Comedies, the miſerable inverſion of all unlawful or unbounded pleſures: there that Prophetic menace concerning *Babylon* which we find *Rev.* 18. 7. will be literally verified upon every unhappy ſoul, *According as ſhe exalted her ſelf and lived delicately, ſo much the more tribulation give her*; the torment of that life will bear proportion to the pride and luxuries of this. It will therefore be neceſſary for thoſe who here wallow in pleſures, to confront to them the remembrance of thoſe rivers of Brimſtone, and ask themſelves the Prophets queſtion, *who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* We find *Eſay*, when he denounces but temporal judgments againſt the daughters of *Zion*, he exactly purſues the Antitheſis, and to every part of their effeminate delicacy he oppoſes the direct contrary hardſhip, inſtead of *ſweet ſmells there ſhall be a ſtink, inſtead of a girdle a rent, inſtead of well ſet hair baldneſs, inſtead of a ſtomacher a girding with ſackcloth, and burning inſtead of beauty, Iſaiah* 3. 24.

And puniſhments that will never end.

9. It were well the daughters of our *Zion* would copy out this lecture, and prudently foreſee how every particular ſin or vanity of theirs will have its adapted puniſhment in another World. And ſure this conſideration well digeſted, muſt needs be a forcible expedient to cleanſe them from all *filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. For is it poſſible for her to cheriſh and blow up her libidinous flames here, who conſiders them but as the firſt kindlings of thoſe inextinguiſhable ones hereafter? Can ſhe make it her ſtudy to pleaſe her appetite, that remembers that *Dives*'s unintermitted feaſt ends in as unallied a thirſt? Or can ſhe deny the crumbs of her table to that *Lazarus*, to whom ſhe foreſees ſhe ſhall then ſupplicate for a drop of water? In fine can ſhe lay out her whole induſtry, her fortune, nay her ingenuity too, in making proviſion for the fleſh, who conſiders that that fleſh will more corrupt by pampering, and breed the worm that never dies? Certainly no woman can be ſo deſperately daring, as thus to attaque damnation, reſiſt her reaſon and her ſenſe, only that ſhe may ruin her ſoul; and unleſs ſhe can do all this, her foreſight will prove her eſcape, and her viewing the bottomleſs pit in Landskip and Picture will ſecure her from a real deſcent into it.

Conſideration would alſo open a more inviting Scene of eternal rewards propos'd to Piety.

10. But now that this Tract may not make its exit in the ſhape of a Fury, bring the meditations to hell and there leave them, it muſt now at laſt ſhift the Scene, and as it has ſhew'd the blackneſs of vice by that outer darkneſs to which it leads, we alſo will let in a beam of the Celeſtial light to diſcover the beauty of Vertue; remind the Reader that there is a region of joy as well as a place of torment, and Piety and Vertue is that milky way that leads to it; a ſtate, compar'd to which the Elyſium of the heathen is as inconſiderable as it is fictitious, the Mahometan Paradiſe as flat and inſipid as it is groſs and brutish; where the undertaking of the Pſalmiſt ſhall be compleatly anſwer'd, thoſe *that fear the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good, Pſalm* 34. 10. And this happy ſtate is as acceſſible as excellent. God is not unſincere in his propoſals, offers not theſe glories only to Tantalize and abuſe us, but to animate and encourage mankind. He ſets up an inviting prize, and he not only marks out, but levels the way to it; makes that our duty which is alſo our pleſure, yea and our honor too. So has he contriv'd for our eaſe, that knowing how hardly we can diveſt our voluptuouſneſs and ambition, he puts us not to it; all he demands is but that he may chooſe the objects, and in that he is yet more obliging, for by that at once he refines and ſatisfies

the desires. He takes us off indeed from the fulsom pleasures of sense, which by their grossness may cloy, yet by reason of their emtiness can never fill us; and brings us to tast the more pure spiritual delights which are the true elixir of Pleasures, in comparison whereof all the sensual are but as the dregs or feces in an extraction, after the spirits are drawn off. In like manner he calls us from our aspiring to those pinnacles of honor, where we alwaies sit totteringly and often fall down, but yet invites us to soar higher, where we shall have the *moon* with all her viciſſitudes and changes *under our feet*, *Rev.* 12. 1. and enjoy a grandeur as irreversible as splendid.

Will teach to hallow the most unsanctified affections.

11. Thus do's he shew us a way to hallow our most unsanctified affections; thus, according to the Prophesie of *Zechariah*, *may holiness be writ even upon the bells of the horses*, *Zec.* 14. 20. upon our most brutal inclinations; and thus may all those feminine Passions which now seduce women from Vertue, advance them in it. Let her that is amorous, place her love upon him who is (as the Spouse tells us, *Cant.* 5. 10.) *the chiefest among ten thousand*; she that is angry, turn her edg against her sins; she that is haughty, disdain the Devils drudgery; she that is fearful, dread him who *can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, *Matth.* 5. 28. and she that is sad, reserve her tears for her penitential offices. Thus may they consecrate even their infirmities; and tho they cannot Deifie, or erect Temples to them, as the Romans did to their Passions, nay their Diseases; yet after they are thus cleansed, they may sacrifice them as the Jews did the clean Beasts in the Tabernacle. Only Irreligion and Profaness is exemt from this Priviledg, no water of Purification can cleanse it, or make it serviceable in the Temple; that, like the spoils of *Jericho*, is so execrable, that it must be devoted to destruction, as *an accursed thing*, *Josh.* 6. 17. For tho God do not despise the work of his own hands, have so much kindness to his Creatures, that he endeavors to reduce all our native inclinations to their primitive rectitude, and therefore do's not abolish, but purifie them; yet Atheism is none of those, 'tis a counterblast from hell, in opposition to that mighty wind in which the holy Spirit descended. Tho the subject in which it subsists may be reform'd, the person may turn Christian, and the wit that maintain'd its blasphemous paradoxes may be converted to holier uses: yet the quality it self is capable of no such happy Metamorphosis; that must be extirpated, for it cannot be made tributary. Which shews how transcendent an ill that is which cannot be converted to good, even that Omnipotence which can out of the very stones raise children to *Abraham*, attemts not any transmutation of this; which ought therefore to possess all hearts with a detestation of it, and to advance them in an earnest pursuit of all the parts of Piety.

There is no wisdom but in the fear of God.

12. And that is it which I would now once more (as a farewell exhortation) commend to my female Readers, as that which vertually contains all other accomplishments; 'tis that pearl in the Gospel for which they may part with all and make a good bargain too. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, saies the wisest of men, *Prov.* 1. 7. and by his experience he shews that it is the compleating end of it too; for he no sooner declin'd from that, but he grew to dotage and dishonor. Let all those therefore to whom God has dispenst an outward affluence, given them a visible splendor in the eies of the World, be careful to secure to themselves *that honor which comes from God only*, *John* 5. 44. unite their souls to that supreme Majesty who is the fountain of true honor: who

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in his bestowing the Crown of righteousness proceeds by the same measures by which he disposed the Crown of *Israel*, when he avow'd to *Samuel* that he *look't not on the outward appearance but beheld the heart*, *Sam.* 16.7. If God see not his own Image there, all the beauty and gaiety of the outward form is despicable in his eies, like the apples of *Sodom* only a kind of painted dust. But if Piety be firmly rooted there, they then become like the Kings daughter all *glorious within* too; a much more valuable bravery then the *garment of needle-work and vesture of Gold*, *Psalm* 45. 14. And this is it that must enter them into the Kings *Palace*, into that *new Jerusalem*, where they shall not wear, but inhabit *pearls* and Gems, *Rev.* 21. 19. be beautiful without the help of art or nature, by the mere reflexion of the Divine brightness; be all that their then enlarg'd comprehensions can wish, and infinitly more then they can here imagine.

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THE GOVERNMENT *OF THE* TONGUE.

THE PREFACE.

THE Government of the Tongue has ever bin juſtly reputed one of the moſt important parts of human Regiment. The Philoſopher and the Divine equally atteſt this: and Solomon (who was both) gives his ſuffrage alſo; the perſwaſions to, and encomiums of it, taking up a conſiderable part of his book of Proverbs. I ſhall not therefore need to ſay any thing to juſtifie my choice of this ſubject, which has ſo much better Authorities to commend it. I rather wiſh that it had not the ſuperaddition of an accidental fitneſs grounded upon the univerſal neglect of it, it now ſeeming to be an art wholly outdated. For tho ſome lineaments of it may be met with in books, yet there is ſcarce any footſteps of it in practice, where alone it can be ſignificant. The attemt therefore of reviving it I am ſure is ſeaſonable, I wiſh it were half as eaſy.

2. Indeed that skill was never very eaſy, it requiring the greateſt vigilance and caution, and therefore not to be attain'd by looſe trifling ſpirits. The Tongue is ſo ſlippery, that it eaſily deceives a drouſy or heedleſs guard. Nature ſeems to have given it ſome unhappy advantages towards that. 'Tis in its frame the moſt ready for motion of any member, needs not ſo much as the flexure of a joint, and by acceſs of humors acquires a glibneſs too, the more to facilitate its moving. And alas we too much find the effect of this its eaſy frame; it often goes without giving us warning; and as children when they happen upon a rolling engine, can ſet it in ſuch a carriere, as wiſer people cannot on a ſudden ſtop; ſo the childiſh parts of us, our paſſions, our fancies, all our mere animal faculties, can thruſt our tongues into ſuch diſorders, as our reaſon cannot eaſily rectify. The due managery therefore of this unruly member, may rightly be eſteem'd one of the greateſt myſteries of Wiſdom and Vertue. This is intimated by St. James, If any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man, and able alſo to bridle the whole body, James 3. 2. 'Tis ſtoried of Bembo a primitive Chriſtian, that coming to a friend to teach him a Pſalm, he began to him the thirty ninth, I ſaid I will take heed to my waies, that I offend not with my Tongue; upon hearing of which firſt verſe, he ſtopt his Tutor, ſaying, This is enough for me, if I learn it as I ought; and being after ſix months rebuk'd for not coming again, he replied, that he had not yet learnt his firſt leſſon: nay after nineteen years he profeſt, that in that time he had ſcarce learnt to fulfill that one line. I give not this inſtance to diſcourage, but rather to quicken men to the ſtudy; for a leſſon that requires ſo much time to learn, had need be early begun with.

3. But eſpecially in this age, wherein the contrary liberty has got ſuch a preposſeſſion, that men look on it as a part of their birth-right; nay do not only let their tongues looſe, but ſtudiouſly ſuggeſt inordinacies to them, and uſe the ſpur where they ſhould the bridle. By this means converſation is ſo generally corrupted, that many have had cauſe to wiſh they had not bin made ſociable creatures. A man ſecluded from company can have but the Devil and himſelf to temt him; but he that converſes, has almoſt as many ſnares as he has companions. Men barter vices, and as if each had not enough of his own growth, tranſplant

tranſplant out of his neighbors ſoil, and that which was intended to cultivate and civilize the world, has turned it into a wild deſert and wilderneſs.

4. *This face of things I confeſs looks not very promiſing to one who is to ſolicite a reformation. But whatever the hopes are, I am ſure the needs are great enough to juſtify the attemt: for as the diſeaſe is Epidemic, ſo it is mortal alſo, utterly inconſiſtent with that pure religion, which leads to life. We may take St.* James's *word for it,* If any man ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that mans religion is vain, James 1. 26. *God knows we have not much Religion among us: 'tis great pity we ſhould fruſtrate the little we have, render that utterly inſignificant, which at the beſt amounts to ſo little. Let therefore the difficulty and neceſſity of the task, prevail with us to take time before us, not to defer this ſo neceſſary a work 'till the night come; or imagine that the Tongue will be able to expiate its whole age of guilt by a feeble* Lord have mercy on me *at the laſt. Tho indeed if that were ſuppoſeable, 'twere but a broken reed to truſt to, none knowing whether he ſhall have time or grace for that. He may be ſurprized with an Oath, a Blaſphemy, a Detraction in his mouth: many have bin ſo. 'Tis ſure there muſt be a dying moment: and how can any man ſecure himſelf, it ſhall not be the ſame with that in which he utters thoſe, and his expiring breath be ſo emploied? Sure they cannot think that thoſe incantations (tho helliſh enough) can make them ſhot free, render them invulnerable to deaths darts; and if they have not that or ſome other as ridiculous reſerves, 'tis ſtrange what ſhould make them run ſuch a mad adventure.*

5. *But I expect it ſhould be objected, that this little deſpicable Tract is not proportionable to the encounter to which it is brought; that beſides the unskilful managing of thoſe points it do's touch, it wholly omits many proper to the ſubject, there being faults of the Tongue which it paſſes in ſilence. I confeſs there is colour enough for this objection. But I believe if it were put to votes, more would reſolve I had ſaid too much, rather then too little. Should I have enlarged to the utmoſt compaſs of this Theme, I ſhould have made the Volume of ſo affrighting a bulk, that few would have attemted it; and by ſaying much I ſhould have ſaid nothing at all to thoſe who moſt need it. Mens ſtomacks are generally ſo queaſie in theſe caſes, that 'tis not ſafe to overload them; let them try how they can digeſt this: if they can ſo as to turn it into kindly nourishment, they will be able to ſupply themſelves with the remainder. For I think I may with ſome confidence affirm, that he that can confine his Tongue within the limits here preſcrib'd, may without much difficulty reſtrain its other excurſions. All I ſhall beg of the Reader, is but to come with ſincere intentions, and then perhaps theſe few* Stones *and* Sling *uſed in the Name, and with invocation of the* Lord of Hoſts, *may countervail the maſſive armor, of the* uncircumciſed Philiſtin; *And may that God who loves to magnifie his power in weakneſs, give it the like ſucceſs.*

THE

THE Government OF THE TONGUE

SECT. I.

Of the Uſe of Speech.

1. MAN at his firſt creation was ſubſtituted by God as his Vicegerent, to receive the homage, and enjoy the ſervices of all inferior beings: nay farther was endowed with excellencies fit to maintain the port of ſo vaſt an Empire. Yet thoſe very excellencies, as they qualified him for dominion, ſo they unfitted him for a ſatisfaction or acquieſcence in thoſe his vaſſals: the dignity of his nature ſet him above the ſociety or converſe of mere animals: ſo that in all the pomp of his roialty, amidſt all the throng and variety of creatures, he ſtill remain'd ſolitary. But God who knew what an appetite of ſociety he had implanted in him, judged this no agreeable ſtate for him, *It is not meet that man ſhould be alone*, *Gen.* 2. 18. And as in the univerſal frame of nature, he ingraffed ſuch an abhorrence of vacuity, that all creatures do rather ſubmit to a preternatural motion then admit it; ſo, in this emty, this deſtitute condition of man, he relieved him by a miraculous expedient, divided him that he might unite him, and made one part of him an aſſociate for the other. *Man in paradiſe could not be happy without converſation.*

2. Neither did God take this care to provide him a companion, merely for the entercourſes of Senſe; had that bin the ſole aim, there needed no new productions, there were ſenſitive creatures enough: the deſign was to entertain his nobler principle, his Reaſon, with a more equal converſe, aſſign him an intimate, whoſe intellect as much correſponded with his, as did the outward form, whoſe heart, according to *Solomons* reſemblance, anſwered his, *As in water face anſwers face*, *Prov.* 27. 19. with whom he might communicate minds, traffic and enterchange all the notions and ſentiments of a reaſonable ſoul. *Such a commerce as would entertain the rational faculties.*

3. But tho there were this ſympathy in their ſublimer part which diſpoſed them to the moſt intimate union; yet there was a cloud of fleſh in the way which intercepted their mutual view, nay permitted no intelligence between them, other then by the mediation of ſome Organ equally commenſurate to ſoul and body. And to this purpoſe the infinite *Make the mind viſible to others.*

wiſdom of God ordained Speech; which as it is a ſound reſulting from the modulation of the Air, has moſt affinity to the Spirit, but as it is uttered by the Tongue, has immediat cognation with the body, and ſo the fitteſt inſtrument to manage a commerce between the rational yet inviſible powers of human ſouls clothed in fleſh.

Hence we derive all the advantages of Society.

4. And as we have reaſon to admire the excellency of this contrivance, ſo have we to applaud the extenſiveneſs of the benefit. From this it is we derive all the advantages of ſociety: without this men of the neareſt neighborhood would have ſignified no more to each other then our *Antipodes* now do to us. All our arts and ſciences for the accommodation of this life, had remain'd only a rude Chaos in their firſt matter, had not ſpeech by a mutual comparing of notions ranged them into order. By this it is we can give one another notice of our wants, and ſolicit relief; by this we interchangably communicate advices, reproofs, conſolations, all the neceſſary aids of human imbecillity. This is that which poſſeſſes us of the moſt valuable bleſſing of human life, I mean Friendſhip, which could no more have bin contracted amongſt dumb men, then it can between pictures and ſtatues. Nay farther to this we owe in a great degree the intereſts even of our ſpiritual being, all the oral, yea and written revelations too of Gods will: for had there bin no language, there had bin no writing. And tho we muſt not pronounce how far God might have evidenced himſelf to mankind by immediat inſpiration of every individual, yet we may ſafely reſt in the Apoſtles inference *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they believe in him whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher?*

A farther excellence of Speech is its ſubſervience to the praiſing God.

5. From all theſe excellent uſes of it in reſpect of man, we may collect another in relation to God, that is, the *praiſing* and *mugnifying* his goodneſs, as for all other effects of his bounty, ſo particularly that he hath given us language, and all the conſequent advantages of it. This is the juſt inference of the Son of *Sirach Eccluſ.* 51. 22. *The Lord hath given me a tongue, and I will praiſe him therewith.* This is the ſacrifice which God calls for ſo often by the Prophets, *the Calves of our lips*, which anſwers to all *the oblations out of the herd*, and which the Apoſtle makes equivalent to thoſe of the *floor* and *wine-preſs* alſo. *Heb.* 13. 15. *The fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* To this we frequently find the Pſalmiſt exciting both himſelf and others, *Awake up my glory, I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the people, and I will ſing unto thee among the nations, Pſal.* 57. 9, 10. And *O praiſe the Lord with me, and let us magnify his name together, Pſal.* 34. 3. And indeed whoever obſerves that excellent magazine of Devotion, the book of Pſalms, ſhall find that the *Lauds* make up a very great part of it.

Which is the beſt touch-ſtone by which to try our Speech.

6. By what hath bin ſaid, we may define what are the grand Uſes of ſpeech, *viz.* the glorifying of God, and the benefiting of men. And this helps us to an infallible teſt by which to try our words. For ſince every thing is ſo far approvable as it anſwers the end of its being, what part ſoever of our diſcourſes agrees not with the primitive ends of ſpeech, will not hold weight in the balance of the ſanctuary. It will therefore nearly concern us to enter upon this ſcrutiny, to bring our words to this touch-ſtone: for tho in our depraved eſtimate the Eloquence of Language is more regarded then the Innocence, tho we think our words vaniſh with the breath that utters them, yet they become records in Gods Court, are laid up in his Archives as witneſſes either for, or againſt us; for he who is truth it ſelf hath told us, that *By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemn'd, Mat.* 12. 37.

SECT.

Sect. II.

Of the manifold Abuſe of Speech.

1. AND now ſince the original deſigns of ſpeaking are ſo noble, ſo advantageous, one would be apt to conclude no rational creature would be temted to pervert them, ſince 'tis ſure he can ſubſtitute none for them, that can equally conduce, either to his honor, or intereſt. *The abuſes of Speech, are as great as its uſe.*

2. Yet experience (that great baffler of ſpeculation) aſſures us the thing is too poſſible, and brings in all ages matter of fact to confute our ſuppoſitions: ſo liable alas is ſpeech to be depraved, that the Scripture deſcribes it as the ſource of all our other depravation. Original ſin came firſt out at the mouth by ſpeaking, before it entred in by eating. The firſt uſe we find *Eve* to have made of her language, was to enter parly with the temter, and from that to become a temter to her husband. And immediatly upon the fall, guilty *Adam* frames his tongue to a frivolous excuſe, which was much leſs able to cover his ſin then the fig-leaves were his nakedneſs. And as in the infancy of the firſt world, the tongue had licked up the venom of the old ſerpent, ſo neither could the Deluge waſh it off in the ſecond. No ſooner was that ſmall colony (wherewith the depopulated earth was to be replanted) come forth of the Ark, but we meet with *Cham* a delator to his own father, inviting his brethren to that execrable ſpectacle of their parents nakedneſs. *Original ſin came firſt out of the mouth by ſpeaking, before it entred in by eating.*

3. Nor did this only run in the blood of that accurſed *Cham*; the holy ſeed was not totally free from its infection, even the Patriarchs themſelves were not exemt. *Abraham* uſed a repeted colluſion in the caſe of his wife, and expoſed his own integrity to preſerve her chaſtity. *Iſaac* the heir of his bleſſing, was ſon of his infirmity alſo, and acted over the ſame ſcene upon *Rebecca*'s account. *Jacob* obtain'd his fathers bleſſing by a flat lie. *Simeon* and *Levi* ſpake not only falſly, but inſidiouſly, nay hypocritically, abuſing at once their proſelytes and their religion, for the effecting their cruel deſigns upon the *Sichemites*. *Moſes* tho a man of an unparallel'd meekneſs, yet *ſpake unadviſedly with his lips*, *Pſalm* 106. 33. *David* uttered a bloody vow againſt *Nabal*, ſpake *words ſmoother then oil* to *Uriah*, when he had don him one injury, and deſign'd him another. 'Twere endleſs to reckon up thoſe ſeveral inſtances, the old Teſtament gives us of theſe lapſes of the tongue: neither want there divers in the new; tho there is one of ſo much horror, as ſuperſedes the naming more, I mean that of St. *Peter* in his reiterated abjuring his Lord, a crime which (abſtracted from the intention) ſeems worſe then that of *Judas*: that traitor own'd his relation, cried *Maſter Maſter* even when he betraied him, ſo that had he bin meſured only by his tongue, he might have paſt for the better diſciple. *The holy Patriarchs were not exemt from failing herein.*

4. Theſe are ſad inſtances, not recorded to patronize the ſin, but to excite our caution. It was a Politic inference of the Elders of Iſrael in the caſe of *Jehu*; *Behold two Kings ſtood not before him, how then ſhall we ſtand?* 2 *Kings* 10. 4. And we may well apply it to this; if perſons of ſo circumſpect a piety, have bin thus overtaken, what ſecurity can there *Which ought to be matter of caution againſt ſo prevailing a danger.*

be for our wretchleſs oſcitancy? If thoſe who *kept* their *mouths as it were with a bridle*, *Pſalm* 39.2. could not alwaies preſerve them innocent, to what guilts may not our unreſtrain'd licentious tongues hurry us? Thoſe which as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, *Pſalm* 73. *go thro the world*, are in that unbounded range very likely to meet with him who walks the ſame round, *Job* 2. and by him be tuned and ſet to his key, be ſcrued and wreſted from their proper uſe, and made ſubſervient to his vileſt deſigns.

The depravation of Speech appears in all parts of human life.

5. And would God this were only a probable ſuppoſition! but alas experience ſupplants the uſe of conjecture in the point: we do not only preſume it may be ſo, but actually find it is ſo. For amidſt the univerſal depravation of our faculties, there is none more notorious then that of ſpeech. Whither ſhall we turn us to find it in its priſtine integrity? amidſt that infinity of words in which we exhauſt our breath, how few are there which do at all correſpond with the original deſignation of ſpeech; nay which do not flatly contradict it? To what unholy, uncharitable purpoſes is that uſeful faculty perverted? That which was meant to ſerve as the perfume of the Tabernacle, to ſend up the incenſes of praiſes and praiers, now exhales in impious vapors, to eclipſe if it were poſſible the father of light. That which ſhould be the ſtore-houſe of relief and refreſhment to our brethren, is become a magazine of all offenſive weapons againſt them, *ſpears and arrows and sharp ſwords*, as the Pſalmiſt often phraſes them. We do not only fall by the ſlipperineſs of our tongues, but we deliberately diſcipline and train them to miſchief. *We bend our tongues as our bows for lies*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* 9. 3. And in a word, what God affirm'd of the old world in relation to thoughts, is too applicable to our words, they *are evil and that continually*, *Gen.* 6. 5. and that which was intended for the inſtrument, the aid of human ſociety, is become the diſturber, the peſt of it.

The running over all particulars being an endleſs task, 'twill be enough to point at the moſt remarkable.

6. I ſhall not attemt a particular diſcuſſion of all the vices of the tongue: it doth indeed paſs all Geography to draw an exact Map of that *world of iniquity*, as St. *James* calls it. I ſhall only draw the greater lines, and diſtribute it into its principal and more eminent parts, which are diſtinguiſhable as they relate to God, our Neighbor, and our Selves; in each of which I ſhall rather make an eſſay by way of inſtance, then attemt an exact enumeration or ſurvey.

SECT. III.

Of Atheiſtical Diſcourſe.

The tongue tho a deſpicable member, is ſo daring as to make war with heaven.

1. I Begin with thoſe which relate to God, this poor deſpicable member the tongue being of ſuch a gigantic inſolence tho not ſize, as even to make war with heaven. 'Tis true every diſorder'd ſpeech doth remotely ſo, as it is a violation of Gods law; but I now ſpeak only of thoſe which as it were attaque his perſon, and immediatly fly in the face of Omnipotency. In the higheſt rank of theſe we may well place all Atheiſtical Diſcourſe, which is that bold ſort of rebellion, which ſtrikes not only at his Autority, but himſelf. Other blaſphemies level ſome at one Attribute, ſome another; but this by a more compendious impiety, ſhoots at his very being, and as if it ſcorn'd thoſe piece-meal guilts,

guilts, ſets up a ſingle monſter big enough to devour them all: for all inferior prophaneſs is as much outdared by Atheiſm, as is religion it ſelf.

2. Time was when the inveighing againſt this, would have bin thought a very impertinent ſubject in a Chriſtian nation, and men would have replied upon me as the *Spartan* Lady did, when ſhe was ask'd what was the puniſhment for adultereſſes, *There are no ſuch things here.* Nay even amongſt the moſt barbarous people, it could have concern'd but ſome few ſingle perſons; no numbers, much leſs ſocieties of men, having ever excluded the belief of a Deity. And perhaps it may at this day concern them as little as ever; for amidſt the various Deities and worſhips of thoſe remoter nations, we have yet no account of any that renounc'd all. 'Tis only our light hath ſo blinded us: ſo that God may upbraid us as he did Iſrael, *Hath a nation changed their gods which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit, Iſa.* 2. 11. This madneſs is now the incloſure, the peculiarity of thoſe, who by their names and inſtitution ſhould be Chriſtians: as if that natural Aphoriſm, *That when things are at the height they muſt fall again*, had place here alſo, and our being of the moſt excellent, moſt elevated religion, were but the preparative to our being of none. *An attemt ſcarce known in the heathen world.*

3. 'Tis indeed deplorable to ſee, how the profeſſors of no God begin to vie numbers with all the differing perſwaſions in religion, ſo that Atheiſm ſeems to be the gulph that finally ſwallows up all our ſects. It has ſtruck on a ſudden into ſuch a reputation, that it ſcorns any longer to ſculk, but own's it ſelf more publicly then moſt men dare do the contrary. 'Tis ſet down in the ſeat of the ſcorner, and ſince it cannot argue, reſolves to laugh all Piety out of countenance, and having ſeized the mint, nothing ſhall paſs for wit that hath not its ſtamp, and with it there is no mettle of ſo baſe an alloy, but ſhall go current. Every the dulleſt creature that can but ſtoutly diſclaim his maker, has by it ſufficiently ſecur'd its title to ingenuity; and ſuch meſures being once eſtabliſh'd, no wonder at its ſholes of proſelytes, when it gives on the one hand licence to all ſenſual inordinancies, permits them to be as much beaſts as they will, or can, and yet tells them on the other, that they are the more men for it. Sure 'tis not ſtrange that a hook thus doubly baited ſhould catch many. Either of thoſe allurements ſingle, we ſee has force enough. The charms of ſenſuality are ſo faſcinating, that even thoſe who believe another world, and the ſevere revenges that will there attend their luxuries, yet chuſe to take them in preſent with all their diſmal reverſions. And then ſure it cannot but be very good news to ſuch a one to be told, that that after-reckoning is but a falſe alarm, and his great willingneſs to have it true, will eaſily incline him to believe it is ſo. And doubtleſs were Atheiſm traced up to its firſt cauſes, this would be found the moſt operative; 'tis ſo convenient for a man that will have no God to controul or reſtrain him, to have none to puniſh him neither, that that utility paſſes into argument, and he will rather put a cheat upon his underſtanding by concluding, there is no future account, then ſuch a ſting in his pleſures, as the remembrance of it muſt needs prove. This ſeems to be the original and firſt riſe of this impiety, it being impoſſible for any man that ſees the whole, nay but the ſmalleſt part of the Univerſe, to doubt of a firſt and ſupreme Being, until from the conſciouſneſs of his provocations, it become his intereſt there ſhould be none. *With us 'tis grown reputable.*

Upon the pretence to wit and reaſon.

4. This is indeed, conſidering the depravation of the world, a pretty faſt tenure for Atheiſm to hold by; yet it has of late twiſted its cord, and got that other ſtring to its bow we before mention'd. Its bold monopolizing of wit and reaſon compells, as the other invited men. This we may indeed call the devils preſs, by which he hath fill'd up his troops: men are afraid of being reproch'd for ſilly and irrational, in giving themſelves up to a blind belief of what they do not ſee. And this bugbear frights them from their religion; reſolving they will be *no fools for Chriſt's ſake*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 13. I dare appeal to the breaſts of many in this age, whether this have not bin one of the moſt prevalent temtations with them to eſpouſe the tenet: and tho perhaps they at firſt took it up, only in their own defence, for fear of being thought fools, yet that fear ſoon converts into ambition of being thought wits. They do not ſatisfy themſelves with deſerting their religion, unleſs they revile it alſo; remembring how themſelves were laught out of it, they eſſay to do the like by others. Yea ſo zealous propugners are they of their negative Creed, that they are importunately diligent to inſtruct men in it, and in all the little ſophiſtries and colors for defending it: ſo that he that would meſure the opinions by their induſtry, and the remiſneſs of believers, would certainly think that the great intereſts of Eternity lay wholly on their ſide. Yet I take not this for any argument of the confidence of this perſwaſion, but the contrary: for we know they are not the ſecure, but the deſperate undertakings, wherein men are moſt deſirous of partners, and there is ſomwhat of horror in an uncouth way, which makes men unwilling to travel it alone.

With which tho the pretenders would bear down others, they cannot convince themſelves.

5. The truth is, tho theſe ſpeak big, and preſcribe as poſitively to their pupils, as if they had ſome counter revelation to confute thoſe of *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, yet were their ſecret thoughts laid open, there would ſcarce be found the like aſſurance there. I will not ſay to what reprobate ſenſe ſome particular perſons have provoked God to deliver them, but in the generality, I believe one may affirm, that there is ſeldom an infidelity ſo ſanguine as to exclude all fears. Their moſt bold Theſis, That there is no God, no judgment, no hell, is often met with an inward tremulous Hypotheſis, What if there be? I dare in this remit me to themſelves, and challenge (not their conſciences, who profeſs to have none, but) their natural ingenuity to ſay, whether they have not ſomtimes ſuch damps and ſhiverings within them. If they ſhall ſay, that theſe are but the reliques of prepoſſeſſion and education, which their reaſon ſoon diſſipates; let me then ask them farther, whether they would not give a conſiderable ſum to be infallibly aſcertain'd there were no ſuch thing: now no ſenſible man would give a farthing to be ſecur'd from a thing which his reaſon tells him is impoſſible; therefore if they would give any thing (as I dare ſay they cannot deny to themſelves that they would) 'tis a true demonſtration that they are not ſo ſure as they pretend to be.

A ſtrange diſingenuity and madneſs to embrace a profeſſion their hearts diſown; and if falſe, will lead to inevitable ruin.

6. I might here join iſſue upon the whole, and preſs them with the unreaſonableneſs, the diſingeniouſneſs of embracing a profeſſion to which their own hearts have an inward reluctance, nay the imprudence of governing their lives by that poſition, which for ought they know may be (nay they actually fear is) falſe, and if it be, muſt inevitably immerſe them in endleſs ruin. But I muſt remember my deſign limits me only to the faults of the Tongue, and therefore I muſt not follow this chaſe beyond thoſe bounds. I ſhall only extend it to my proper ſubject, that of Atheiſtical talk, wherein they make as mad an adventure as in any

other

other of their enormous practices, nay perhaps in ſome reſpects a worſe.

7. In the firſt place 'tis to be conſider'd, that if there be a God, he, as well as men, may be provok'd by our words as well as deeds. Secondly 'tis poſſible he may be more. Our ill deeds may be don upon a vehement impulſe of temtation; ſome profit or pleſures may tranſport and hurry us; and they may at leaſt have this alleviation, that we did them to pleaſe or advantage our ſelves, not to ſpight God. But Atheiſtical words cannot be ſo palliated: they are arrows directly ſhot againſt heaven, and can come out of no quiver but malice; for 'tis certain there never was man that ſaid, There was no God, but he wiſh'd it firſt. We know what enhancement our injuries to each other receive from their being malicious: and ſure they will do ſo much more to God, whoſe principal demand from us is, that we give him our heart. But thirdly this implieth a malice of the higheſt ſort. Human ſpight is uſually confin'd within ſome bounds, aims ſomtimes at the goods, ſomtimes at the fame, at moſt but at the life of our neighbor: but here is an accumulation of all thoſe, back'd with the moſt prodigious inſolence. 'Tis God only that hath power of annihilation, and we (vile worms) ſeek here to ſteal that incommunicable right, and retort it upon himſelf, and by an anticreative power would unmake him who has made us. Nay laſtly, by this we have not only the utmoſt guilt of ſingle rebels, but we become ring-leaders alſo, draw in others to that accurſed aſſociation: for 'tis only this liberty of diſcourſe that hath propagated Atheiſm. The Devil might perhaps by inward ſuggeſtions have drawn in here and there a ſingle Proſelyte; but he could never have had ſuch numbers, had he not uſed ſome as decoies to enſnare others.

The provocation of words is as great, nay may be greater then that of deeds.

8. And now let the brisk Atheiſt a little conſider, what theſe aggravations will amount to. 'Twas good counſel was given to the *Athenians*, to be very ſure *Philip* was dead, before they expreſt joy at his death, leſt they might find him alive to revenge that haſty triumph. And the like I may give to theſe men, Let them be very ſure there is no God, before they preſume thus to defie him, leſt they find him at laſt aſſert his being in their deſtruction. Certainly nothing leſs then a demonſtration can juſtify the reaſonableneſs of ſuch a daring. And when they can produce that, they have ſo far outgon all the comprehenſions of mankind, they may well challenge the liberty of the Tongue, and ſay, *They are their own, who is Lord over them, Pſalm* 12.4.

It has no advantage to balance the danger.

9. But 'till this be done, 'twere well they would ſoberly ballance the hazards of this liberty with the gains of it. The hazards are of the moſt dreadful kind, the gains of the ſlighteſt: the moſt is but a vain applauſe of wit for an impious jeſt; or of reaſon, for a deep conſiderer: and yet even for that they muſt incroach on the Devils right too, who is commonly the promter, and therefore if there be any credit in it may juſtly challenge it. Indeed 'tis to be fear'd he will at laſt prove the maſter wit, when as for thoſe little loans he makes them, he gets their ſouls in morgage. Would God they would conſider betimes, what a woful raillery that will be, which for ought they know may end in *gnaſhing of teeth.*

The utmoſt gain, is vain applauſe.

10. The next impiety of the Tongue is Swearing, that fooliſh ſin which plaies the Platonic to damnation, and courts it purely for its ſelf, without any of the appendant allurements which other ſins have: a vice which for its guilt may juſtify the ſharpeſt; and for its cuſtomarineſs, the frequenteſt invectives which can be made againſt it: but it has bin aſſaulted ſo often by better pens, and has ſhewed it ſelf ſo much proof againſt all Homi-

Swearing, is a remarkable part of Atheiſtical diſcourſe.

Homily, that it is as needleſs as diſcouraging a task for me to attemt it. 'Tis indeed a thing taken up ſo perfectly without all ſenſe, that 'tis the leſs wonder to find it maintain its ſelf upon the ſame principle 'tis founded, and continue in the ſame defiance to reaſon wherein it began.

Which is ſtrangely twiſted with Atheiſm by which in reaſon it ſhould be ſuperſeded.

11. All therefore that I ſhall ſay concerning it, is to expreſs my wonder how it has made a ſhift to twiſt it ſelf with the former ſin of Atheiſm, by which according to all rules of reaſoning it ſeems to be ſuperſeded: and yet we ſee none own God more in their oaths, then thoſe that diſavow him in their other diſcourſe: nay ſuch men ſwear not only to ſwell their language, and make it ſound more full and bluſtring, but even when they moſt deſire to be believ'd. What an abſurdity of wickedneſs is this? Is there a God to ſwear by, and is there none to believe in, none to pray to? We call it frenzy to ſee a man fight with a ſhadow: but ſure 'tis more ſo, to invoke it. Why then do theſe men of reaſon make ſuch ſolemn appeals (for ſuch every oath is) to a mere Chimera and Phantaſm? It would make one think they had ſome inward belief of a Deity, which they upon ſurprizal thus blurt out: if it argue not this, it do's ſomthing worſe, and becomes an evidence how much the appearance of a ſin recommends it to them, that they thus catch at it, without examining how it will conſiſt with another they like better. Theſe are indeed wholeſale chapmen to Satan, that do not truck and barter one crime for another, but take the whole herd: and tho by reaſon of their diſagreeing kinds they are apt to gore and worry each other, yet he ſtill keeps up his old policy, and will not let one Devil caſt out another. A league ſhall be made between the moſt diſcordant ſins, and there ſhall be a God, or there ſhall be none, according as opportunity ſerves to provoke him: ſo aſſuming to himſelf a power which even Omnipotence diſclaims, the reconciling contradictions. And he ſucceeds in it as far as his concern reaches: for tho he cannot ſolve the repugnancies in reaſon, yet as long as he can unite the ſins in mens practice, he has his deſign; nay has at once the gain and the ſport of fooling theſe great pretenders to ratiocination.

Another ſort is profanation of Holy Scripture.

12. A third ſort of impious diſcourſe there is, which yet is bottom'd on the moſt ſacred, I mean thoſe profane paraphraſes, that are uſually made upon the holy Text, many making it the ſubject of their cavils, and others of their mirth. Some do it out of the former Atheiſtical principle, and I cannot but confeſs they act conſonantly to themſelves in it; for 'tis but a needful artifice for men to diſparage thoſe teſtimonies, which they fear may be brought againſt them. But there are others who not only profeſs a God, but alſo own the ſacred Scripture for his word, and yet uſe it as courſly as the others. And theſe, I confeſs, are riddles of profaneſs, that hang, as ſome have pictured *Solomon*, between heaven and hell, borrow the Chriſtians faith, and the Atheiſts drollery upon it: and 'tis hard to ſay in which they are more in earneſt. It is indeed ſcandalous to ſee, to what deſpicable uſes thoſe holy Oracles are put: ſuch as ſhould a Heathen obſerve, he would little ſuſpect them to be own'd by us as the rule of our religion, and could never think they were ever meant for any thing beyond a whetſtone for wit. One tries his Logic upon them, and objects to the ſenſe; another his Rhetoric, and quarrels at the phraſe; a third his contrivance, and thinks he could have woven it with a better contexture: never conſidering, that unleſs they could confute the Divinity of their original, all theſe accuſations are nothing elſe but direct blaſphemy, the making God *ſuch a one as themſelves,*

Pſalm

Pſalm 50. 21. and charging him with thoſe defects which are indeed their own. They want learning or induſtry to ſound the depth of thoſe ſacred treſures, and therefore they decry the Scripture as mean and poor, and to juſtify their own wiſdom, diſpute Gods. This is as if the mole ſhould complain the ſun is dark, becauſe he dwells uuder ground, and ſees not his ſplendor. Men are indeed in all inſtances apt to ſpeak ill of the things they underſtand not, but in none more then this. Their ignorance of local cuſtoms, Idioms of language, and ſeveral other circumſtances, renders them incompetent judges, (as hath bin excellently evinc'd by a late Author). 'Twill therefore befit them, either to qualify themſelves better, or to ſpare their Criticiſms. But upon the whole, I think I may challenge any ingenious man, to produce any writing of that antiquity, whoſe phraſe and genius is ſo accommodated to all ſucceſſions of ages. Stiles and waies of addreſs we know grow obſolete, and are almoſt antiquated as garments: and yet after ſo long a tract of time, the Scripture muſt (by conſidering men) be confeſt to ſpeak not only properly, but often politely and elegantly to the preſent age: a great argument that it is the dictate of him that is, *The ſame yeſterday, to day and for ever*, *Heb.* 13. 7.

Of which not only the malicious detractors, but ludicrous jeſters are guilty.

13. But beſides theſe more ſolemn traducers, there are a lighter ludicrous ſort of profaners, who uſe the Scripture as they do odd ends of plaies, to furniſh out their jeſts; cloath all their little impertinent conceits in its language, and debaſe it by the mixture of ſuch miſerable trifles, as themſelves would be aſhamed of, were they not heightned and inſpirited by that profaneſs. A Bible phraſe ſerves them in diſcourſe, as the haut gouſt do's in diet, to give a reliſh to the moſt inſipid ſtuff. And were it not for this magazine, a great many mens raillery would want ſupplies: for there are divers who make a great noiſe of wit, that would be very mute if this one Topic were barr'd them. And indeed it ſeems a tacite confeſſion, that they have little of their own, when they are fain thus to commit ſacriledg to drive on the trade. But ſure 'tis a pitiful pretence to ingenuity that can be thus kept up, there being little need of any other faculty but memory to be able to cap Texts. I am ſure ſuch repetitions out of other books would be thought pedantic and ſilly. How ridiculous would a man be, that ſhould alwaies enterlard his diſcourſe with fragments of *Horace*, or *Virgil*, or the Aphoriſms of *Pythagoras*, or *Seneca*? Now 'tis too evident, that it is not from any ſuperlative eſteem of ſacred Writ, that it is ſo often quoted: and why ſhould it then be thought a ſpecimen of wit to do it there, when 'tis folly in other inſtances? The truth is, 'tis ſo much the reſerve of thoſe who can give no better teſtimony of their parts, that methinks upon that very ſcore it ſhould be given over by thoſe that can. And ſure were it poſſible for any thing that is ſo bad to grow unfaſhionable, the world has had enough of this to be cloied with it: but how fond ſoever men are of this divertiſement, 'twill finally prove that *mirth Solomon* ſpeaks of, which *ends in heavineſs*, *Prov.* 14. 13. for certainly whether we eſtimate it according to human or Divine meſures, it muſt be a high provocation of God.

Such uſage we ſhould not bear, in any writings of our own.

14. Let any of us but put the caſe in our own perſons: ſuppoſe we had written to a friend, to advertiſe him of things of the greateſt importance to himſelf, had given him ample and exact inſtructions, back'd them with earneſt exhortations and conjurings not to neglect his own concern, and laſtly enforced all with the moſt moving expreſſions of kindneſs and tenderneſs to him: ſuppoſe, I ſay, that after all this, the next

news we ſhould hear of that letter, were to have it put in doggrel rime, to be made ſport for the rabble, or at beſt have the moſt eminent phraſes of it pickt out and made a common by-word: I would fain know how any of us would reſent ſuch a mixture of ingratitude and contumely. I think I need make no minute application. The whole deſign of the Bible do's ſufficiently anſwer, nay outgo the firſt part of the parallel, and God knows our vile uſage of it do's too much (I fear too literally) adapt the latter. And if we think the affront to baſe for one of us, can we believe God will take it in good part? That were to make him not only more ſtupid then any man, but as much ſo as the heathen Idols, that have *eies and ſee not*, *Pſalm* 115. 5. And 'tis ſure the higheſt madneſs in the world, for any man that believes that there is a God, to imagine he will finally ſit down by ſuch uſage.

The Heathen Oracles found a more civil treatment. So alſo the Moſaic Law.

15. But if we weigh it in the ſcale of religion, the crime will yet appear more heinous. Mere natural Piety has taught men to receive the Reſponſes of their Gods with all poſſible veneration. What applications had the Delphic Oracle from all parts, and from all ranks of men? What confidence had they in its prediction, and what obedience did they pay to its advice? If we look next into the Moſaical Oeconomy, we ſhall ſee with what dreadful Solemnities that Law was promulged, what an awful reverence was paid to the mount whence it iſſued, how it was fenced from any rude intruſions either of men or beaſts: and after it was written in tables, all the whole equipage of the Tabernacle, was deſign'd only for its more decent repoſitory, the Ark it ſelf receiving its value only from what it had in cuſtody. Yea ſuch a hallowing influence had it, as transfuſed a relative ſanctity even to the meaneſt utenſils, none of which were after to be put to common uſes: the very perfume was ſo peculiar and ſacred, that it was a capital crime to imitate the compoſition. Afterwards when more of the divine revelations was committed to writing, the Jews were ſuch ſcrupulous reverers of it, that 'twas the buſineſs of the Maſorites, to number not only the ſections and lines, but even the words and letters of the old Teſtament, that by that exact calculation they might the better ſecure it from any ſurreptitious practices.

Yet a higher reſpect is due to the Goſpel.

16. And ſure the New Teſtament is not of leſs concern then the Old: nay the Apoſtle aſſerts it to be of far greater, and which we ſhall be more accountable for, *For if the word ſpoken by Angels were ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience receiv'd a juſt recompence, how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken to us by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? Heb.* 2. 23. And it is in another place the inference of the ſame Apoſtle, from the excellency of the Goſpel above the Law, that we ſhould *ſerve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear*, *Heb.* 12. 28. And certainly 'tis but an ill eſſay of that reverence and godly fear, to uſe that very Goſpel ſo irreverently and ungodlily as men now do. If we paſs from the Apoſtle to the next ſucceeding ages of the Church, we find the Primitive Chriſtians lookt on their Bibles as their moſt important treſure. Such was the outward reſpect they paid to them (of which the ſtanding up at the reading of the Goſpel, ſtill in uſe among us, is a faint memorial) that the heathen perſecutors made it one part of their examination of the Chriſtians brought to their tribunals, *What thoſe books were which they adored while they read them?* Such was their intimate eſteem, that they expoſed all things elſe to the rapine of their enemies, ſo they might ſecure thoſe volumes. Nor was this only an heroic piece of zeal in ſome, but indiſpenſably

ſably required of all: inſomuch that when in the heat of perſecution, they were commanded to deliver up their Bibles to be burnt, the Church gave no indulgence for that neceſſity of the times, but exhorted men rather to deliver up their lives: and thoſe whoſe courage fail'd them in the encounter, were not only branded by the infamous name of *Traditors*, but ſeparated from the communion of the faithful, and not readmitted till after many years of the ſevereſt penance.

17. I have given this brief narration, with a deſire that the Reader will compare the practice of former times with thoſe of the preſent, and ſee what he can find either among Heathens, Jews or Chriſtians, that can at all patronize our profaneſs. There was no reſpect thought too much for the falſe Oracles of a falſer God: and yet we think no contemts too great for thoſe of the true. The moral Law was ſo ſacred to the Jews, that no parts of its remoteſt retinue, thoſe ceremonial attendants, were to be lookt on as common: and we who are equally obliged by that Law, laugh at that by which we muſt one day be judged. The Ritual, the Preceptive, the Prophetic, and all other parts of ſacred Writ, were moſt ſedulouſly, moſt religiouſly guarded by them: and we look upon them as a winter nights tale, from which to fetch matter of ſport and merriment. Laſtly the firſt Chriſtians paid a veneration to, nay ſacrificed their lives to reſcue their Bibles from the unworthy uſage of the Heathens, and we our ſelves expoſe them to worſe: they would but have burnt them, we ſcorn and vilify them, and outvy even the perſecutors malice with our contemt. Theſe are miſerable Antitheſiſes; yet this God knows is the caſe with too many. I wonder what new ſtate of Felicity hereafter theſe men have fancied to themſelves: for ſure they cannot think theſe retrograde ſteps, can ever bring them ſo much as to the Heathens Elyſium, much leſs the Chriſtians Heaven.

This age is ſingular in its profanation.

18. It will therefore concern thoſe who do not quite renounce their claim to that Heaven, to conſider ſoberly, how inconſiſtent their practice is with thoſe hopes. A man may have a great eſtate conveied to him; but if he will madly burn, or childiſhly make paper kites of his Deeds, he forfeits his title with his evidence: and thoſe certainly that deal ſo with the Conveiances of their eternal inheritance, will not ſpeed better. If they will thus dally and play with them, God will be as little in earneſt in the performance, as they are in the reception of the promiſes; nay he will take his turn of mocking too, and when their ſcene of mirth is over, his will begin. A dreadful menace of this we have *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, &c. which deſerves to be ſet down at large, *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded: But ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof: I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind: when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you, then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.* Would God I could as well tranſcribe this Text into mens hearts, and there would need no more to ſecure the whole Canon of Scripture from their profanation! Could men but look a little before them, and apprehend how in the daies of their diſtreſs and agony, they will gaſp for thoſe comforts which they now turn into ridicule; they would not thus madly defeat themſelves, cut off their beſt and only reſerve, and with a pitiful contemt, caſt away thoſe Cordials, which will then be the only ſupport of their fainting ſpirits. As for thoſe who deride Scripture upon Atheiſtical

We do not uſe to burn, or trifle with the deed: and conveiances of our eſtates.

ſtical grounds, all I ſhall ſay is to refer to what I have ſaid in the beginning of this Section; they had need be very well aſſured that foundation be not ſandy: for if it be, this reproching Gods word will be a conſiderable addition to the guilt of all their other hoſtility, and how jolly ſoever they ſeem at preſent, it may be when that queſtion they are ſo willing to take for granted, is by death drawing near a deciſion, ſome of their confidence will retire, and leave them in an amazed expectation of ſomwhat, which they are ſure cannot be good for them, who have ſo ill provided for it. Then perhaps their merry vein will fail them; and not their infidelity, but their deſpair may keep them from invocating that Power they have ſo long derided. 'Tis certain it has ſo happened with ſome: for as Practical, ſo Speculative wickedneſs, has uſually another aſpect, when it ſtands in the ſhadow of death, then in the dazling beams of health and vigor. It would therefore be wiſdom before hand to draw it out of this deceitful light, and by ſober ſerious thoughts place it as near as may be in thoſe circumſtances in which 'twill then appear: and then ſure to hearts that are not wholly petrified, 'twill appear ſafer to own a God early and upon choice, then late upon compulſion.

If duty will not reſtrain from atheiſtical diſcourſe, civility ſhould.

19. However if they will not yield themſelves Homagers, yet the mere poſſibility of their being in the wrong, ſhould methinks perſwade them at leaſt to be civil adverſaries. A generous man will not purſue even a falling enemy with revilings and reproch, much leſs will a wiſe man do it to one who is in any the leaſt probability of revenging it: it being a receiv'd Maxim, That there is no greater folly then for a man to let his tongue betray him to miſchief. Let it therefore in this caſe at leaſt ſtand neuter, that if by their words they be not juſtified, yet by their words they may not be condemned. They can be no looſers by it: for at the utmoſt, 'tis but keeping in a little unſavory breath, which (ſuppoſing no Gods to be offended with it) is yet nauſeous to all thoſe men who believe there is one. To thoſe indeed who have a zeal for their faith, there can be no diſcourſe ſo intolerable, ſo diſobliging: it turns converſation into skirmiſhing, and perpetual diſputes. The Egyptians were ſo zealous for their brutiſh Deities, that *Moſes* preſumed the Iſraelites ſacrificing of thoſe beaſts they adored, muſt needs ſet them in an uproar *Exod.* 8. 26. And ſure thoſe who do acknowledg a Divine power, cannot contentedly ſit by to hear him blaſphemed. 'Tis true there are ſome ſo cool, that they are of the ſame mind for God, that *Gideons* father was for *Baal*, *Judges* 6. 31. *Let him plead for himſelf*, they will not appear in his defence: yet even theſe have a ſecret conſciouſneſs, that they ought to do ſo, and therefore have ſome uneaſineſs in being put to the Teſt: ſo that it cannot be a pleaſant entertainment even for them. And therefore thoſe who have no fear of God to reſtrain them, ſhould methinks, unleſs they be perfectly of the temper of the unjuſt Judg, *Luke* 17. 1. in reſpect to men, abſtain from all ſorts of impious diſcourſe; and at leaſt be civil, tho they will not be pious.

SECT.

Sect. IV.

Of Detraction.

1. WE have ſeen in the laſt Section the inſolence of the Tongue towards God; and ſure we cannot expect it ſhould pay more reverence to men. If there be thoſe that dare *ſtretch their mouths againſt heaven*, *Pſalm* 73. 9. we are not to wonder if there be more that will *ſhoot their arrows*, *even bitter words*, againſt the beſt on earth, *Pſalm* 64. 3. I ſhall not attemt to ranſack the whole quiver, by ſhewing every particular ſort of verbal injuries which relate to our Neighbors, but rather chuſe out ſome few, which either for the extraordinarineſs of their guilt, or the frequency of their practice, are the moſt eminent. I begin with *Detraction*, in which both thoſe qualities concur: for as in ſome inſtances 'tis one of the higheſt ſins, ſo in the general 'tis certainly one of the moſt common, and by being ſo becomes inſenſible. This vice (above all others) ſeems to have maintain'd not only its Empire, but its reputation too. Men are not yet convinced heartily that it is a ſin: or if any, not of ſo deep a die, or ſo wide an extent as indeed it is. They have if not falſe, yet imperfect notions of it, and by not knowing how far its Circle reaches, do often like young Conjurers ſtep beyond the limits of their ſafety.

Detraction ſeems to have prevail'd among men, in that they are not generally convinc'd of its guilt.

2. This I am the apter to believe, becauſe I ſee ſome degree of this fault cleave to thoſe, who have eminently corrected all other exorbitancies of the Tongue. Many who would ſtartle at an Oath, whoſe ſtomachs as well as conſciences recoil at an obſcenity, do yet ſlide glibly into a Detraction: which yet methinks perſons otherwiſe of ſtrict converſations ſhould not do frequently and habitually, had not their eaſy thoughts of the guilt ſmoothed the way to it.

And therefore remains with otherwiſe vertuous men.

3. It may therefore be no unkind attemt, to try to diſentangle from this ſnare by diſplaying it; ſhewing the whole contexture of the ſin, how 'tis woven with threds of different ſizes, yet the leaſt of them ſtrong enough to nooze and intrap us. And alas, if Satan fetter us, 'tis indifferent to him whether it be by a cable or a hair: nay perhaps the ſmalleſt ſins are his greateſt ſtratagems. The finer his line is ſpun, the leſs ſhadow it caſts, and is leſs apt to fright us from the hook: and tho there be much odds between a talent of lead and a grain of ſand, yet thoſe grains may be accumulated, 'till they out-weigh the talent. It was a good reply of *Plato*'s, to one who murmured at his reproving him for a ſmall matter, *Cuſtom*, ſaies he, *is no ſmall matter*. And indeed ſuppoſing any ſin were ſo ſmall as we are willing to fancy moſt, yet an indulgent habit even of that would be certainly ruinous: that indulgence being perfectly oppoſite to the Love of God, which better can conſiſt with the indeliberate commiſſions of many ſins, then with an allowed perſiſtance in any one.

If it were light in it ſelf, cuſtom might give great aggravations.

4. But in this matter of Detraction I cannot yield that any is ſmall, ſave only comparatively with ſome other of the ſame kind which is greater: for abſolutely conſidered, there is even in the very loweſt degrees of it, a flat contradiction to the grand rule of Charity, the loving our neighbor as our ſelves. And ſurely that which at once violates the

The ſin conſider'd abſolutely is great.

ſum of the whole ſecond Table of the Law, for ſo our Savior renders it *Luke* 10. 7. muſt be lookt on as no trifling inconſiderable guilt. To evidence this I ſhall in the Anatomizing this ſin, apply this Rule to every part of it. I ſhall firſt conſider it in Groſs, in its entire body, and after deſcend to its ſeveral limbs.

Detraction imports the leſſening of a man in his fame.

5. Detraction in the native importance of the word, ſignifies the withdrawing or taking off from a thing; and as it is applied to the reputation, it denotes the impairing and leſſening a man in point of fame, rendring him leſs valued and eſteem'd by others, which is the final aim of Detraction, tho purſued by various means.

Which men generally value as their civil life.

6. This is juſtly lookt on as one of the moſt unkind deſigns one man can have upon another, there being implanted in every mans nature a great tenderneſs of Reputation: and to be careleſs of it, is lookt on as a mark of a Degenerous mind. On which account *Solon* in his Laws preſumes, that he that will ſell his own fame, will alſo ſell the public intereſt. 'Tis true, many have improv'd this too far, blown up this native ſpark into ſuch flames of Ambition, as has ſet the world in a combuſtion; Such as *Alexander*, *Ceſar*, and others, who ſacrificed Hecatombs to their Fame, fed it up to a prodigy upon a Cannibal diet the fleſh of Men: yet even theſe exceſſes ſerve to evince the univerſal conſent of mankind, that Reputation is a valuable and deſirable thing.

To which the Scriotures add their ſuffrage.

7. Nor have we only the ſuffrage of man, but the atteſtation of God himſelf, who frequently in Scripture gives teſtimony to it: *A good name is better then great riches*, *Prov.* 22. 1. And again, *A good name is better then precious ointment*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 1. And the more to recommend it, he propoſes it as a reward to Piety and Vertue, as he menaces the contrary to wickedneſs. *The memory of the juſt ſhall be bleſſed, but the name of the wicked ſhall rot.* And that we may not think this an invitation fitted only to the Jewiſh Oeconomy, the Apoſtle goes farther, and propoſes the endeavor after it as a duty, *Whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things*, *Phil.* 4. 8.

All good men have preferr'd their reputation before their goods or life.

8. And accordingly good men have in their eſtimate ranked their names the next degree to their Souls, preferr'd them before goods or life. Indeed 'tis that which gives an inferior ſort of Immortality, and makes us even in this world ſurvive our ſelves. This part of us alone continues verdant in the grave, and yields a perfume, when we are ſtench and rottenneſs: the conſideration whereof has ſo prevail'd with the more generous Heathens, that they have cheerfully quitted life in contemplation of it. Thus *Epaminondas* alacriouſly expired, in confidence that he left behind him a perpetual memory of the victories he had atchiev'd for his Country. *Brutus* ſo courted the fame of a Patriot, that he brake thro all the obſtacles of gratitude and humanity to attain it: he cheerfully bare the defeat of his attemt, in contemplation of the glory of it. 'Twere endleſs to recount the ſtories of the *Codri*, *Decii*, and *Curtii*, with the train of thoſe noble Hero's, who in behalf of their Countries devoted themſelves to certain death.

Our own reſentments of ill dealing in this kind, will convince us of the greatneſs of the injury.

9. But we need no forreign Mediums to diſcover the value of a good name: let every man weigh it but in his own ſcales, return to his breaſt, and there reflect on that impatience he has when his own repute is invaded. To what dangers, to what guilts do's ſomtimes the mere fancy of a reproch hurry men? It makes them really forfeit that vertue from whence all true reputation ſprings, and like *Eſops* dog looſe the ſubſtance by too greedy catching at the ſhadow; an irrefragable proof how great a price they ſet upon their fame.

10. And

10. And then ſince reaſon ſets it at ſo high a rate, and paſſion at a higher, we may conclude the violating this intereſt, one of the greateſt injuries in human commerce; ſuch as is reſented not only by the raſh, but the ſober: ſo that we muſt pick out only blocks and ſtones, the ſtupid and inſenſible part of mankind, if we think we can inflict this wound without an afflictive ſmart. And tho the power of Chriſtianity do's in ſome ſo moderate this reſentment, that none of thoſe blows ſhall recoil, no degree of revenge be attemted; yet that do's not at all juſtify or excuſe the inflicter. It may indeed be a uſeful trial of the patience and meekneſs of the defam'd, yet the defamer has not the leſs either of crime or danger: not of crime, for that is rather enhanc'd then abated by the goodneſs of the perſon injur'd; nor of danger, ſince God is the more immediat avenger of thoſe who attemt not to be their own. But if the injury meet not with this meekneſs (as in this vindictive age 'tis manifold odds it will not) it then acquires another accumulative guilt, ſtands anſwerable not only for its own poſitive ill, but for all the accidental which it cauſes in the ſufferer, who by this means is robb'd not only of his repute, but his innocence alſo, provoked to thoſe unchriſtian returns, which draw God alſo into the enmity, and ſet him at once at war with heaven and earth. And tho as to his immediat judgment, he muſt bear his iniquity, anſwer for his impatience: yet as in all civil inſurrections the ring-leader is lookt on with a particular ſeverity, ſo doubtleſs in this caſe, the firſt provoker has by his ſeniority and primogeniture a double portion of the guilt, and may conſequently expect of the Puniſhment, according to the Doom of our Savior, *Wo be to that man by whom the offence cometh*, *Mat.* 18. 7.

11. Indeed there is ſuch a train of miſchiefs uſually follow this ſin, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible to make a full eſtimate of its malignity. 'Tis one of the grand incendiaries which diſturbs the peace of the world, and has a great ſhare in moſt of its quarrels. For could we examin all the feuds which harraſs Perſons, Families, nay ſomtimes Nations too, we ſhould find the greater part, take their riſe from injurious reprochful words, and that for one which is commenc'd upon the intuition of any real conſiderable intereſt, there are many which owe their being to this licentiouſneſs of the Tongue. *The miſchiefs are infin t that follow Detraction.*

12. In regard therefore of its proper guilt, and all thoſe remoter ſins and miſeries which enſue it, 'tis every mans great concern to watch over himſelf. Neither is it leſs in reſpect both of that univerſal aptneſs we have to this ſin, and its being ſo perpetually at hand, that for others we muſt attend occaſions and convenient ſeaſons, but the opportunities of this are alwaies ready: I can do my neighbor this injury, when I can do him no other. Beſides the multitude of objects do proportionably multiply both the poſſibilities and incitations; and the objects here are as numerous, as there are Perſons in the world, I either know, or have heard of. For tho ſome ſorts of Detractions ſeem confin'd to thoſe to whom we bear particular malice, yet there are other kinds of it more ranging, which fly indifferently at all. Laſtly this ſin has the aid almoſt of univerſal example, which is an advantage beyond all the other, there being ſcarce any ſo irreſiſtable inſinuation as the practice of thoſe with whom we converſe, and no ſubject of converſe ſo common as the defaming our neighbors. *T'e guilt is alſo eaſily incurr'd.*

13. Since then the path is ſo ſlippery, it had not need be dark too. Let us then take in the beſt light we can, and attentively view this ſin in *Therefore needs to be particularly decipher'd.*

in its ſeveral branches, that by a diſtinct diſcovery of the divers acts and degrees of it, we may the better be arm'd againſt them all.

SECT. V.

Of Lying Defamation.

Defamatory reports are either true or falſe.

1. DETRACTION being (as we have already ſaid) the leſſening and impairing a man in his repute, we may reſolve, that whatever conduces to that end, is properly a Detraction. I ſhall begin with that which is moſt eminent, the ſpreading of Defamatory reports. Theſe may be of two kinds, either falſe, or true: which tho they ſeem to be of very different complexions, yet may ſpring from the ſame ſtock, and drive at the ſame deſign. Let us firſt conſider of the falſe.

The higheſt degree is the inventing a perfect falſity.

2. And this admits of various circumſtances. Somtimes a man invents a perfect falſity of another; ſomtime he that do's not invent it, yet reports it, tho he know it to be falſe; and a third ſort there are, who having not certain knowledg whether it be falſe or no, do yet divulge it as an abſolute certainty, or at leaſt with ſuch artificial inſinuations, as may biaſs the hearer on that hand. The former of theſe is a crime of ſo high, ſo diſingenious a nature, that tho many are vile enough to commit it, none are ſo impudent as to avow it. Even in this age of inſulting vice, when almoſt all other wickedneſs appears bare-fac'd, this is fain to keep on the vizard. No man will own himſelf a falſe accuſer: for if modeſty do not reſtrain him, yet his very malice will; ſince to confeſs would be to defeat his deſign. Indeed it is of all other ſins the moſt Diabolical, it being a conjunction of two of Satans moſt eſſential properties, Malice and Lying. We know 'tis his peculiar title to be *the Accuſer of the brethren:* and when we tranſcribe his copy, we alſo aſſume his nature, intitle our ſelves to a deſcent from him, *Ye are of your Father the Devil, John* 8.44. We are by it rendred a ſort of *Incubus* brats, the infamous progenies of the lying Spirit. It is indeed a ſin of ſo groſs, ſo formidable a bulk, that there needs no help of Optics to render it diſcernable, and therefore I need not further expatiate on it.

A ſecond degree is the wilful propagating anothers lie.

3. The next degree is not much ſhort of it; what it wants is rather of invention then malice: for he that will ſo adopt anothers lie, ſhews he would willingly have bin its proper Father. It do's indeed differ no more then the maker of adulterate wares, do's from the vender of them: and certainly there cannot be a more ignominious trade, then the being Huckſters to ſuch vile Merchandize. Neither is the ſin leſs then the baſeneſs: we find the *Lover* of a lie ranked in an equal form of guilt with the *Maker*, *Rev.* 21.27. And ſurely he muſt be preſum'd to love it, that can deſcend to be the broker to it, help it to paſs currant in the world.

A third degree is the reporting that, whoſe truth the reporter is not aſſur'd of.

4. The third ſort of Detractors look a little more demurely, and with the woman in the *Proverbs*, Chapter 30. v. 20. *wipe their mouths, and ſay they have done no wickedneſs.* They do not certainly know the falſity of what they report, and their ignorance muſt ſerve them as an Amulet againſt the guilt both of deceit and malice: but I fear it will do neither. For firſt perhaps they are affectedly ignorant: they are ſo willing it ſhould

be

be true, that they have not attemted to examine it. But Secondly it do's not ſuffice that I do not know the falſity: for to make me a true ſpeaker, 'tis neceſſary I know the truth of what I affirm. Nay if the thing were never ſo true, yet if I knew it not to be ſo, its truth will not ſecure me from being a liar: and therefore whoever endeavors to have that receiv'd for a certainty, which himſelf knows not to be ſo, offends againſt truth. The utmoſt that can conſiſt with ſincerity, is to repreſent it to others as doubtful as it appears to him: yet even that how conſonant ſoever to truth, is not to Charity. Even doubtful accuſations leave a ſtain behind them, and often prove indelible injuries to the party accuſed: how much more then do the more poſitive and confident aſperſions we have hitherto ſpoken of? Let me add only this concerning this later ſort, that they are greater advancers of Defamatory deſigns, then the very firſt contrivers. For thoſe upon a conſciouſneſs of their falſneſs are obliged to proceed cautiouſly, to pick out the credulous and leaſt diſcerning perſons, on whom to impoſe their fictions, and dare not produce them in all companies for fear of detection: but theſe in confidence that the untruth (if it be one) lies not at their door, ſpeak it without any reſtraint in all places, at all times, and what the others are fain to whiſper, they proclaim, like our new Engine, which pretends to convey a whiſper many miles off. So that as in the caſe of Stealing, 'tis proverbially ſaid, that if there were no receivers, there would be no thieves; ſo in this of Slander, if there were fewer ſpreaders, there would be fewer forgers of Libels: the manufacture would be diſcourag'd, if it had not theſe retailers to put off the wares.

5. Now to apply theſe practices to our rule of duty, there will need no very cloſe inſpection to diſcern the obliquity. The moſt ſuperficial glance will evidence theſe ſeveral degrees of Slanderers, to do what they would not be willing to ſuffer. Who among them can be content to be falſely aſperſed? Nay ſo far are they from that, that let but the ſhadow of their own calumny reflect on themſelves, let any but truly tell them that they have falſely accuſed others, they grow raving and impatient, like a dog at a looking-glaſs fiercely combating that image which himſelf creates: and how ſmoothly ſoever the original lie ſlides from them, the Echo of it grates their ears. And indeed 'tis obſervable, that thoſe which make the greateſt havock of other mens reputation, are the moſt nicely tender of their own; which ſets this ſin of calumny in a moſt Diametrical oppoſition to the Evangelical precept of *Loving our neighbors as our ſelves.* *All theſe practices fall under the rule of doing as we would be done by.*

6. Thus much is diſcernable even in the ſurface of the crime: but if we look deeper and examine the motives, we ſhall find the foundation well agrees to the ſuperſtructure, they being uſually one of theſe two, *Malice* or *Intereſt.* And indeed the thing is ſo diſingenious, ſo contrary to the dictates of Humanity as well as Divinity, that I muſt in reverence to our common nature, preſume it muſt be ſome very forcible impellent, that muſt drive a man ſo far from himſelf. The Devil here plaies the Artiſt: and as the fatalleſt poiſons to man are (they ſay) drawn from human bodies, ſo here he extracts the venom of our Iraſcible and Concupiſcible part, and in it dips thoſe arrows, which we thus ſhoot at one another. *Defamation is generally founded either on malice or intereſt.*

7. 'Tis needleſs to harangue ſeverally upon each. The world too experimentally knows the force of both. *Malice* is that whirlwind, which has ſhook States and Families, no leſs then private Perſons; a paſſion ſo *Paſſions exceedingly impetuous and precipitate.*

impetuous and precipitate, that it often equally involves the Agent and the Patient: a malicious man being of like violence with thoſe who flung in the three Children, *Daniel* 3. conſumed by thoſe flames into which he caſt others. As for *Intereſt*, 'tis that univerſal Monarch to which all other Empires are Tributaries, to which men ſacrifice not only their Conſciences and Innocence, but (what is uſually much dearer) their Senſualities and Vices. Thoſe whom all the Divine (either) threats or promiſes, cannot perſwade to mortify, nay but reſtrain one Luſt, at *Mammons* beck will diſclaim many, and force their inclinations to comply with their intereſt.

'Tis alſo practiced as wit and divertiſement.

8. And whilſt this ſin of Calumny has two ſuch potent Abettors, we are not to wonder at its growth: as long as men are malicious and deſigning, they will be traducing; thoſe Cyclops's will be perpetually forging Thunderbolts, againſt which no innocence or vertue can be proof. And alas we daily find too great effect of their induſtry. But tho theſe are the forgers of the more ſolemn deliberate calumnies, yet this ſportive age hath produc'd another ſort, there being men that defame others by way of divertiſement, invent little ſtories that they may find themſelves exerciſe, and the Town talk. This if it muſt paſs for ſport, is ſuch as *Solomon* deſcribes, *Prov.* 26. 18, 19. *As a mad man that caſteth fire-brands, arrows and death, ſo is he that deceiveth his neighbor, and ſaith, am not I in ſport?* He that ſhoots an arrow in jeſt, may kill a man in earneſt, and he that gives himſelf liberty to play with his neighbors fame, may ſoon play it away. Moſt men have ſuch an aptneſs to entertain ſiniſter opinions of others, that they greedily draw in any ſuggeſtion of that kind; and one may as eaſily perſwade the thirſty earth to refund the water ſhe has ſuckt into her veins, as them to depoſite a prejudice they have once taken up. Therefore ſuch experiments upon fame, are as dangerous as that which *Alexander* is ſaid to have made of the force of *Naptha* upon his Page, from which he ſcarce eſcaped with life. Theſe jocular ſlanders are often as miſchievous as thoſe of deeper deſign, and have from the ſlightneſs of the temtation an enhancement of guilt. For ſure he that can put ſuch an intereſt of his neighbors in balance with a little fit of laughter, ſets it at a lower price then he that hopes to enrich or advance himſelf by it: and tho it paſs among ſome for a ſpecimen of wit, yet it really leaves them among *Solomons* fools who *make a mock at ſin*, *Prov.* 14. 9. In the mean time ſince ſlander is a plant that can grow in all ſoils, ſince the frolick humor as well as the moroſe betraies to the guilt, who can hope to eſcape this *Scourge of the Tongue*, as the Wiſe man calls it, which communicates with all. Perſons of all ranks do mutually aſperſe, and are aſperſed: ſo that he who would not have his credulity abuſed, has ſcarce a ſecurer way, then (like that Aſtrologer, who made his Almanac give a tolerable account of the weather by a direct inverſion of the common prognoſticators,) to let his belief run quite counter to reports. Yea ſo Epidemic is this diſeaſe grown, that even religion (at leaſt thoſe parties and factions which aſſume that name) has got a taint of it; each ſect or opinion ſeeking to repreſent its Antagoniſt as odious as it can: and whilſt they contend for ſpeculative truth, they by mutual calumnies forfeit the practic: a thing that juſtly excites the grief of good men, to ſee that thoſe who all pretend to the ſame Chriſtianity, ſhould only be unanimous in the violating that truth and Charity it preſcribes.

9. And

9. And if theſe be the weapons of our ſpiritual warfare, what may we think of the carnal? How are our ſecular animoſities purſu'd, when our Speculations are thus managed? How eaſily do we run down the reputation of any who ſtand in the way, either of our ſpleen or avarice? When *Joſeph*'s reſolute purity had changed the ſcene of his Miſtreſs's paſſion, ſhe do's as readily ſhift that of guilt too, and fixes her crime upon him, *Gen.* 39. So when *Ziba* had a mind to undermine *Mephiboſheth* in his eſtate, he firſt practices upon his fame in a falſe accuſation, 2 *Sam.* 16. 3. And alas how familiarly do men now ſee both theſe ſcenes reacted? Thoſe who will not take vice into their boſoms, ſhall yet have it beſpatter their faces: they who will not run *to the ſame exceſs of riot,* muſt expect to be evil ſpoken of, 1 *Peter* 4. 4. Nay not only pious men, but piety it ſelf partakes of the ſame fate, falls under the two-edg'd ſlander both of deceit and folly. And if men cannot be permitted quietly to enjoy their piety, much leſs will they thoſe things whereof the world has more guſt, I mean ſecular advantages. There are ſtill crimes to be diſcover'd in the poſſeſſors of honors or Eſtates, and they wonderfully excite the zeal of thoſe who would ſupplant them. What artifices are there to make them appear unworthy of what they have, that others more unworthy may ſucceed them? Nor are theſe ſtorms only in the upper region, in the higher ranks of men; but if we paſs thro all degrees, we ſhall find the difference is rather in the value of the things, then in the means of purſuing them. He that pretends to the meaneſt office, do's as ſtudiouſly diſparage his competitor, as he that is rival'd for a kingdom. Nay even he that has but a merry humor to gratify, makes no ſcruple to do it with the loſs of another mans reputation.

'Tis uſed as a weapon againſt adverſaries of all kinds.

10. Thus do we accommodate every petty temporal intereſt at the coſt of our eternal: and as an unskilful Fencer, whilſt he is purſuing his thruſt, expoſes his body; ſo whilſt we thus actuate our own malice, we abandon our ſelves to Satans, receive mortal wounds from him, only that we may give a few light ſcratches to one another. For as I have before ſaid, there is nothing do's more ſecure his title to us, then this vice of Calumny, it bearing his proper impreſs and figure. And we may fear *Chriſt* will one day make the ſame Judgment of Perſons as he did of coin, and award them to him *whoſe Image and Superſcription* they bear, *Matth.* 22. 20.

We accommodate every little temporal intereſt at the coſt of our eternal.

11. And now how great a madneſs is it, to make ſuch coſtly oblations to ſo vile an Idol? This is indeed the worſhiping our own Imaginations, preferring a malicious fiction before a real felicity, and is but faintly reſembled by him, who is ſaid to have choſen to part with his Biſhopric, rather then burn his Romance. Alas are there not groſs corporal ſins enough to ruin us, but muſt we have aereal ones too, damn our ſelves with Chimera's, and by theſe forgeries of our brains dream our ſelves to deſtruction.

A great madneſs to add to our groſs corporal ſins, the guilt of forgeries and Chimera's.

12. Let all thoſe then who thus unhappily imploy their inventive faculty, timely conſider, how unthriving a trade 'tis finally like to prove, that all their falſe accuſations of others, will rebound in true ones upon themſelves. It do's often ſo in this world, where many times the moſt Clandeſtine contrivances of this kind meet with detection: or if they ſhould happen to keep on the diſguiſe here, yet 'twill infallibly be torn off at the great day of manifeſtation, when before God, Angels, and Men, they will be render'd infinitly more vile, then 'twas poſſible for them here to make others.

Our falſe accuſations of others, will be true ones upon our ſelves.

SECT. VI.

Of Uncharitable Truth.

The relating of what is true may be Defamation.

1. IN the next place we are to consider of the other branch of Defamatory reports, *viz.* such as are true: which tho they must be confest to be of a lower form of guilt then the former, yet as to the kind, they equally agree in the definition of Detraction, since 'tis possible to impair a mans credit by true reports as well as by false.

Tho guilt be the material, discovery is the formal cause of infamy.

2. To clear this I shall first observe, that altho every fault hath some penal effects which are coetaneous to the act, yet this of Infamy is not so: this is a more remote consequent; that which it immediatly depends upon, is the publishing. A man may do things which to God and his own conscience render him abominable, and yet keep his reputation with men: but when this stifled crime breaks out, when his secret guilts are detected, then, and not till then, he becomes infamous: so that altho his sin be the Material, yet it is the discovery that is the Formal cause of his infamy.

The divulging of conceled faults is not alwaies unlawful.

3. This being granted, it follows that he that divulges an unknown conceled fault, stands accountable for all the consequences that flow from that divulging; but whether accountable as for guilt, must be determin'd by the particular circumstances of the cause. So that here we must admit of an exception: for tho every discovery of anothers fault be in the strict natural sense of the word a Detraction, yet it will not alwaies be the sin of Detraction, because in some instances there may some higher obligation intervene, and supersede that we owe to the fame of our neighbor; and in those cases it may not only be lawful, but necessary to expose him.

Particularly when the discovery is upon obligation of Justice or Charity.

4. Now all such cases I conceive may summarily be reduced to two heads, Justice and Charity. First as to Justice: that we know is a fundamental vertue, and he that shall violate that, to abound in another, is as absurd, as he that undermines the foundation to raise the walls. We are not to steal to give alms, and God himself has declar'd that he hates robbery for a burnt-offering: so that no pretence either of Charity or Piety can absolve us from the duty we owe to Justice. Now it may often fall out, that by concealing one mans fault, I may be injurious to another, nay to a whole community: and then I assume the guilt I concele, and by the Laws both of God and Man, am judged an accessory.

Justice not only to others but also to ones self.

5. And as Justice to others enforces, so somtimes Justice to a mans self allows the publishing of a fault, when a considerable intereſt either of fame or fortune cannot otherwise be rescued. But to make loud outcries of injury, when they tend nothing to the redress of it, is a liberty rather assumed by rage and impatience, then authoriz'd by Justice. Nay often in that case the complainer is the most injurious Person; for he inflicts more then he suffers, and in lieu of some trivial right of his which is invaded, he assaults the other in a nearer interest, by wounding him in his good name: but if the cause be considerable, and the manner regular, there lies sure no obligations upon any man, to wrong himself, to indulge to another.

6. Neither

6. Neither do's Charity retrench this liberty: for tho it be one act of Charity to concele another mans faults, yet ſomtimes it may be inconſiſtent with ſome more important Charity, which I owe to a third Perſon, or perhaps to a multitude; as in thoſe caſes wherein public benefit is concern'd. If this were not allowable, no hiſtory could lawfully be written, ſince if true, it cannot but recount the faults of many: no evidence could be brought in againſt a Malefactor: and indeed all diſcipline would be ſubverted, which would be ſo great a miſchief, that Charity obliges to prevent it, what Defamation ſoever fall upon the guilty by it. For in ſuch inſtances 'tis a true rule, that mercy to the evil proves cruelty to the innocent: and as in a competition of miſchiefs, we are to chuſe the leaſt, ſo of two goods the greateſt, and the more extenſive, is the moſt eligible. *Charity tho it covers, yet it ſomtimes betraies offences.*

7. Nay even that Charity which reflects upon my ſelf, may alſo ſomtimes ſuperſede that to my Neighbor, the rule obliging me to love him as, not better then, my ſelf. I need not ſure ſilently aſſent to my own unjuſt Defamation, for fear of proving another a falſe accuſer, nor ſuffer my ſelf to be made a begger, to concele another mans being a thief. 'Tis true, in a great inequality of intereſts, Charity (whoſe Character it is, *Not to ſeek her own*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 5.) will promt me to prefer a greater concern of my neighbors, before a ſlight one of my own: but in equal circumſtances I am ſure at liberty to be kind firſt to my ſelf. If I will recede even from that, I may; but that is then to be accounted among the Heroic flights of Charity, not her binding and indiſpenſable Laws. *Charity not only to a neighbor, but alſo to ones ſelf.*

8. Having now ſet the boundaries to the excepted caſes; as all inſtances within them will be legitimated, ſo all without them will (by the known rule of exceptions) be precluded, and fall under that general duty we owe to our neighbor, of tendering his credit: an obligation ſo Univerſally infringed, that 'tis not imaginable the breach ſhould alwaies happen within the excepted caſes. When 'tis remembred how unactive the principles of Juſtice and Charity are now grown in the world, we muſt certainly impute ſuch inceſſant effects, to ſome more vigorous cauſes: of which it may not be amiſs to point out ſome of the moſt obvious, and leave every man to examine which of them he finds moſt operative in himſelf. *Of the unwarrantable cauſes of Defamation.*

9. In the firſt place I may reckon *Pride*, a humor which as it is alwaies mounting, ſo it will make uſe of any foot-ſtool towards its riſe. A man who affects an extraordinary ſplendor of reputation, is glad to find any foils to ſet him off; and therefore will let no fault nor folly of anothers enjoy the ſhade, but brings it into the open light, that by that compariſon, his own excellencies may appear the brighter. I dare appeal to the breaſt of any proud man, whether he do not upon ſuch occaſions, make ſome Phariſaical reflections upon himſelf, whether he be not apt to ſay, *I am not like other men, or as this Publican*, *Luke* 18. tho probably he leave out the *God I thank thee.* Now he that cheriſhes ſuch reſentments as theſe in himſelf, will doubtleſs be willing to propagate them to other men, and to that end render the blemiſhes of others as viſible as he can. But this betraies a degenerous ſpirit, which from a conſciouſneſs that he wants ſolid worth, on which to bottom a reputation, is fain to found it on the ruins of other mens. The true Diamond ſparkles even in the Sun-ſhine: 'tis but a glow-worm vertue, that ows it luſter to the darkneſs about it. *Pride is a principal ingredient in Defamation.*

Another promter to Detraction is Envy.

10. Another promter to Detraction is *Envy*, which ſomtimes is particular, ſomtimes general. He that has a picque to another, would have him as hateful to all mankind as he is to him; and therefore as he grieves and repines at any thing that may advance his eſtimation, ſo he exults and triumphs when any thing occurs which may depreſs it, and is uſually very induſtrious to improve the opportunity, nay has a ſtrange ſagacity in hunting it out. No Vulture do's more quickly ſcent a carcaſs, then an envious Perſon do's thoſe *dead flies* which corrupt his neighbors ointment, *Eccleſ.* 10. 1. the vapor whereof his hate, like a ſtrong wind, ſcatters and diſperſes far and near. Nor needs he any great crime to practice on: every little infirmity or paſſion, lookt on thro his Optics, appears a mountainous guilt. He can improve the leaſt ſpeck or freckle into a leproſy, which ſhall overſpread the whole man: and a cloud no *bigger then a mans hand*, like that of *Eliſha*, 1 *Kings* 18. 44. may in an inſtant, with the help of prejudice, grow to the utter darkening of his reputation, and fill the whole horizon with tempeſt and horror. Somtimes this Envy is general, not confin'd to any mans perſon, but diffuſed to the whole nature. Some tempers there are ſo malign, that they wiſh ill to all, and believe ill of all; like *Timon* the Athenian, who profeſt himſelf a univerſal man-hater. He whoſe guilty conſcience reflects diſmal images of himſelf, is willing to put the ſame ugly ſhape upon the whole nature, and to conclude that all men are the ſame, were they but cloſely inſpected. And therefore when he can ſee but the leaſt glimmering of a fault in any, he takes it as a proof by his Hypotheſis, and with an envious joy calls in as many Spectators as he can. 'Tis certain there are ſome in whoſe ears nothing ſounds ſo harſh as the commendation of another, as on the contrary nothing is ſo melodious as a Defamation. *Plutarch* gave an apt inſtance of this upon *Ariſtides*'s baniſhment, whom when a mean Perſon had propos'd to oſtraciſm, being askt what diſpleſure *Ariſtides* had done him, he replied, *None, neither do I know him, but it grieves me to hear every body call him a juſt man.* I fear ſome of our keeneſt accuſers now adaies may give the ſame anſwer. No man that is eminent for Piety (or indeed but moral vertue) but he ſhall have many infidious eies upon him *watching for his halting*: and if any the leaſt obliquity can be eſpied, he is uſed worſe then the vileſt malefactor: for ſuch are tried but at one bar, and know the utmoſt of their doom, but theſe are arraigned at every Table, in every Tavern. And at ſuch variety of Judicatories, there will be as great variety of ſentences; only they commonly concur in this one, that he is an Hypocrite, and then what complacency, what triumph have they in ſuch a diſcovery? There is not half ſo much Epicuriſm in any of their moſt ſtudied luxuries, no ſpectacle affords them ſo much pleſure, as a bleeding fame thus lying at their mercy.

Another occaſion of Detraction is flattery to a Patron.

11. Another ſort of Detractors there are, whoſe deſigns are not ſo black, but are mean and ſordid, much too light to be put in balance with a neighbors Credit. Of thoſe ſome will pick up all the little ſtories they can get, to humor a Patron: an artifice well known by thoſe trencher gueſts, who, like Rats, ſtill haunt the beſt Proviſions. Theſe men do almoſt come up to a literal ſenſe of what the *Pſalmiſt* ſpoke in a figurative, *Pſal.* 14. *and eat up People for bread*, tare and worry men in their good names, that themſelves may eat. It was a Curſe denounced againſt *Eli*'s off-ſpring, *that they ſhould come and crouch for a morſel of bread*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 39. But ſuch men court this as a preferment, and to bring themſelves

ſelves within the reach of it, ſtick not to aſſume that vileſt office of common Delators. There are others who when they have got the knowledg of another mans fault, think it an endearing thing to whiſper it in the ear of ſome friend or confident. But ſure if they muſt needs ſacrifice ſome ſecret to their friendſhip, they ſhould take *David*'s rule, and *not offer that which coſt them nothing.* If they will expreſs their confidence, let them acquaint them with their own private crimes. That indeed would ſhow ſomthing of truſt: but thoſe experiments upon another mans coſt, will hardly convince any conſidering perſon of their kindneſs.

Another occaſion of Defamation is the itch of telling news.

12. There ſtill remains a yet more trifling ſort of Defamers, who have no deliberate deſign which they purſue in it, yet are as aſſiduous at the Trade as the deeper contrivers. Such are thoſe who publiſh their neighbors failings as they read Gazets, only that they may be telling News: an Itch wherewith ſome Peoples tongues are ſtrangely over-run, who can as well hold a glowing Coal in their mouths, as keep any thing they think New; nay will ſomtimes run themſelves out of breath, for fear leaſt any ſhould ſerve them as *Ahimaaz* did *Cuſhi*, 2 *Sam.* 18. 23. and tell the tale before them. This is one of the moſt Childiſh vanities imaginable: and ſure men muſt have Souls of a very low level, that can think it a commenſurate entertainment. Others there are who uſe Defamatory diſcourſe, neither for the love of News, nor Defamation, but purely for love of talk: whoſe ſpeech like a flowing Current bears away indiſcriminately whatever lies in its way. And indeed ſuch inceſſant talkers, are uſually people not of depth enough to ſupply themſelves out of their own ſtore, and therefore can let no forreign acceſſion paſs by them, no more then a Mill which is alwaies going, can afford any waters to run waſt. I know we uſe to call this Talkativeneſs a Feminine vice; but to ſpeak impartially, I think, tho we have given them the incloſure of the Scandal, they have not of the fault, and he that ſhall appropriate Loquacity to Women, may perhaps ſomtimes need to light *Diogenes*'s Candle to ſeek a man: for 'tis poſſible to go into Maſculine company, where 'twill be as hard to edg in a word, as at a Female Goſſiping. However as to this particular of Defaming, both the Sexes ſeem to be at a vie: and I think he were a very Critical Judg, that could determine between them.

Harmleſs intention will not excuſe from the guilt of Defamation.

13. Now leaſt theſe later ſort of Defamers ſhould be apt to abſolve themſelves, as men of harmleſs intentions, I ſhall deſire them to conſider, that they are only more impertinent, not leſs injurious. For tho it be granted, that the proud and envious are to make a diſtinct account for their Pride and Envy; yet as far as relates to the neighbor, they are equally miſchievous. *Anacreon* that was choaked with a grape-ſtone, died as ſurely as *Julius Ceſar* with his three and twenty wounds; and a mans reputation may be as well fool'd and prattled away, as maliciouſly betraied. Nay perhaps more eaſily; for where the ſpeaker can leaſt be ſuſpected of deſign, the hearer is apter to give him Credit: this way of inſinuating by familiar diſcourſe, being like thoſe poiſons that are taken in at the pores, which are the moſt inſenſibly ſuck'd in, and the moſt impoſſible to expel.

Of things that are bad 'tis vain to make comparisons.

14. But we need not diſpute which is worſt, ſince 'tis certain all are bad, none of them (or any that hold proportion with them) being at all able to pretend their warrant either from Juſtice or Charity. And then what our Savior ſaies in another caſe, will be appliable to this, *He that is not for us is againſt us, Mat.* 12. 30. He that in publiſhing his neighbors

bors faults, acts not upon the dictates of Juſtice or Charity, acts directly in contradiction to them: for where they do not upon ſome particular reſpects command, they do implicitly and generally forbid all ſuch diſcoveries.

If the occaſion be trivial, the ſin upon ſo ſlight a motive is the more inexcuſable. Beſides, in a mans fame nothing is trivial.

15. For firſt if the fault divulged be of a light nature, the offender cannot thereby merit ſo much as to be made a public diſcourſe. Fame is a tender thing, and ſeldom is toſt and bandied without receiving ſome bruiſe, if not a crack: for reports we know like ſnow-balls gather ſtill the farther they role, and when I have once handed it to another, how know I how he may improve it; and if he deliver it ſo advanced to a third, he may give his contribution alſo to it, and ſo in a ſucceſſive tranſmitting, it may grow to ſuch a monſtrous bulk, as bears no proportion to its Original. He muſt be a great ſtranger to the world, that has not experimentally found the truth of this. How many perſons have lain under great and heavy ſcandals, which have taken their firſt riſe only from ſome inadvertence, or indiſcretion? Of ſo quick a growth is Slander, that the leaſt grain like that of muſtard-ſeed, mention'd *Mat.* 13. 32. immediatly ſhoots up into a tree. And when it is ſo, it can no more be reduced back into its firſt cauſe, then a tree can ſhrink into that little ſeed from whence it firſt ſprang. No ruins are ſo irreparable as thoſe of reputation: and therefore he that pulls out but one ſtone towards the breach, may do a greater miſchief then perhaps he intends: and a greater injuſtice too; for by how much the more ſtrictly Juſtice obliges to reparation in caſe of injuries don, ſo much the more ſeverely do's it prohibit the doing thoſe injuries which are uncapable of being repair'd. In the Levitical Law he that knew his Ox was apt to gore, and yet kept him not up, ſtood reſponſible for any miſchief he happen'd to do, *Exod.* 21. 29. I think there is no conſidering man can be ignorant how apt even little trivial accuſations are to tear and mangle ones fame: and if yet the laviſh talker reſtrain them not, he certainly ſtands accountable to God, his Neighbor, and his own Conſcience, for all the danger they procure.

Many men have bin irrecoverably debauch'd by having their faults detected.

16. But if the report concern ſome higher and enormous crime, 'tis true the delinquent may deſerve the leſs pity, yet perhaps the reporter may not deſerve the leſs blame: for often ſuch a diſcovery ſerves but to enrage, not reclaim the offender, and precipitate him into farther degrees of ill. Modeſty and fear of ſhame, is one of thoſe natural reſtraints, which the wiſdom of God has put upon mankind, and he that once ſtumbles, may yet by the check of that bridle recover again: but when by a public detection he is fallen under that infamy he fear'd, he will then be apt to diſcard all caution, and to think he ow's himſelf the utmoſt pleſures of his vice, as the price of his reputation. Nay perhaps he advances farther, and ſets up for a reverſt ſort of Fame, by being eminently wicked: and he who before was but a Clandeſtine diſciple, becomes a Doctor of impiety. And ſure it were better to let a conceled crime remain in its wiſht obſcurity, then by thus rouzing it from its covert, bring it to ſtand at bay, and ſet it ſelf in this open defiance; eſpecially in this degenerous age, when vice has ſo many well wiſhers, that like a hoping party, they eagerly run in to any that will head them.

The divulging of crimes many times teaches them.

17. And this brings in a third conſideration relating to the public, to which the divulging of private (eſpecially if they be novel, unuſual) crimes, do's but an ill piece of ſervice. Vice is contagious, and caſts peſtilential vapors: and as he that ſhould bring out a plague-ſick Perſon,

to

to inform the world of his diſeaſe, would be thought not to have much befriended his neighborhood, ſo he that diſplaies theſe vicious Ulcers, whilſt he ſeeks to defame one, may perhaps infect many. We too experimentally find the force of ill examples. Men often take up ſins, to which they have no natural propenſion, merely by way of conformity and imitation. But if the inſtance happen in a crime, which more ſuits the practice of the hearers, tho it cannot be ſaid to ſeduce, yet it may encourage and confirm them, embolden them not only the more frequently to act, but even to avow thoſe ſins, wherein they find they ſtand not ſingle, and by diſcovering a new acceſſory to their Party, invite them the more heartily and openly to eſpouſe it.

Our great concern to concele our own faults, is a full proof of the injuſtice of divulging thoſe of others.

18. Theſe are ſuch effects as ſurely do very ill correſpond with that Juſtice and Charity we owe either to particular Perſons, or to mankind in General. And indeed no better can be expected, from a practice which ſo perfectly contradicts the grand rule both of Juſtice and Charity, The doing as we would be done to. That this do's ſo, every man has a ready conviction within him, if he pleaſe but to conſult his own heart. Alas with what ſolicitude do we ſeek to hide our own guilts, what falſe dreſſes, what varniſhes have we for them? There are not more arts of diſguiſing our Corporal blemiſhes, then our Moral: and yet whilſt we thus paint and parget our own deformities, we cannot allow any the leaſt imperfection of anothers to remain undetected, but tear off the veil from their bluſhing frailties, and not only expoſe, but proclaim them. And can there be a groſſer, a more deteſtable partiality then this? God may ſure in this inſtance (as in many others) expoſtulate with us as he did with Iſrael, *Ezekiel* 33. *Are not your waies unequal?* What Barbariſm, what inhumanity is it, thus to treat thoſe of the ſame common nature with our ſelves, whom we cannot but know have the ſame concern to preſerve a Reputation, and the ſame regret to looſe it, which we have? And what a ſhame is it, that that Evangelical precept, of doing as we would be done to, which met with ſo much reverence even from Heathens, that *Severus* the Emperour prefer'd it to all the Maxims of Philoſophers, ſhould be thus contemn'd and violated by Chriſtians, and that too upon ſuch ſlight inconſiderable motives as uſually prevail in this caſe of Defamation?

Calumny returns back upon its author.

19. But we are not to conſider this fault only in its root, as it is a defect of Juſtice and Charity, but in its product too, as it is a Seminary of more Injuſtice and Uncharitableneſs. Thoſe diſadvantageous reports we make of our neighbors, are almoſt ſeen to come round: for let no man perſwade himſelf, that the hearers will keep his counſel any better then he do's that of the defam'd Perſon. The ſofteſt whiſper of this kind, will find others to Eccho it, till it reach the ears of the concern'd Party, and perhaps with ſome enhancing circumſtances too. And when 'tis conſider'd how unwilling men are to hear of their faults, tho even in the mildeſt and moſt charitable way of admonition, 'tis not to be doubted a public Defamation will ſeem diſobliging enough to provoke a return; which again begets a rejoinder, and ſo the quarrel is carried on with mutual recriminations: all malicious enquiries are made into each others manners, and thoſe things which perhaps they did in cloſets, come to be proclaim'd upon the houſe-top: ſo the wild-fire runs round, till ſomtimes nothing but blood will quench it; or if it arrive not to that, yet it uſually fixes in an irreconcilable feud. To this is often owing thoſe diſtances we ſee among friends and relations; this breeds

ſuch ſtrangeneſs, ſuch animoſities amongſt neighbors, that you cannot go to one, but you ſhall be entertain'd with invectives againſt the other; nay perhaps you ſhall loſe both, becauſe you are willing to ſide with neither.

By it peace is forfe ted.

20. Theſe are the uſual conſequences of the liberty of the Tongue: and what account can any man give to himſelf, either in Chriſtianity or Prudence, that has let in ſuch a train of miſchiefs, merely to gratify an impotent childiſh humor of telling a tale? Peace was the great Legacy Chriſt left to his followers, and ought to be guarded, tho we expoſe for it our greateſt temporal concerns, but cannot without deſpight to him, as well as our brethren, be thus proſtituted.

The emploiment, is moſt diſgraceful.

21. Yet if we conſider it abſtractedly, from theſe more ſolemn miſchiefs which attend it, the mere levity and unworthineſs of it ſets it below an ingenious Perſon. We generally think a tatler and buſy-body a title of no ſmall reproach: yet truly I know not to whom it more juſtly belongs, then to thoſe, who buſy themſelves firſt in learning, and then in publiſhing the faults of others: an emploiment which the Apoſtle thought a blot, even upon the weaker ſex, and thinks the prevention of ſuch importance, that he preſcribes them to change their whole condition of life; to convert Widow-hood (tho a ſtate which in other reſpects he much prefers, 1 *Cor.* 7. 8.) into marriage, rather then expoſe themſelves to the temtation, 1 *Tim.* 5. 13, 14. And if their impotence cannot afford excuſe for it, what a debaſement is it of mens nobler faculties to be thus entertain'd. The Hiſtorian gives it as an ill indication of *Domitian*'s temper, that he emploi'd himſelf in catching and tormenting Flies: and ſure they fall not under a much better character, either for wiſdom, or good nature, who thus ſnatch up all the little fluttering reports they can meet with to the prejudice of their neighbors.

Cenſure is a branch of Detraction.

22. But beſides this divulging the faults of others, there is another branch of Detraction naturally ſpringing from this root, and that is cenſuring and ſevere judging of them. We think we have not well plai'd the Hiſtorians, when we have told the thing, unleſs we add alſo our remarks, and animadverſions on it. And altho 'tis, God knows, bad enough to make a naked relation, and truſt it to the ſeverity of the hearers; yet few can content themſelves with that, but muſt give them a ſample of rigor, and by the bitterneſs of their own cenſure invite them to paſs the like: a proceſs contrary to all rules of Law or Equity, for the plaintiff to aſſume the part of a Judg. And we may eaſily divine the fate of that mans fame, that is ſo unduly tried.

Every man ſets up a tribunal, to judge his neighbour.

23. 'Tis indeed ſad to ſee how many private tribunals are every where ſet up, where we ſcan and judg our neighbor's actions, but ſcarce ever acquit any. We take up with the moſt incompetent witneſſes, nay often ſuborn our own ſurmiſes and jealouſies, that we may be ſure to caſt the unhappy Criminal. How nicely and ſcrupulouſly do we examine every circumſtance, (would God we were but half as exact in our own penitential inquiſitions) and torture it to make it confeſs ſomthing which appears not in the more general view of the fact, and which perhaps never was in the actors intention? In a word we do like witches with their Magical Chymiſtry, exact all the venom, and take none of the allay. By this means we confound the degrees of ſins, and ſentence deliberate and indeliberate, a habit or an act all at one rate, that is commonly, at the utmoſt it can amount to, even in its worſe acception: and ſure this were a moſt culpable corruption in judgment, could we ſhew our commiſſion to judg our brethren.

24. But

24. But here we may every one of us interrogate our ſelves in our Saviors words, *Who made me a Judg? Luke* 12. 14. And if he diſclaim'd it, (who in reſpect of his Divinity had the Supreme right) and that too in a caſe wherein one (at leaſt) of the Litigants had deſir'd his Interpoſition; what a boldneſs is it in us to aſſume it, where no ſuch appeal is made to us, but on the contrary the Party diſowns our Autority? Nay (which is infinitly more) 'tis ſuperſeded by our great Law-giver, in that expreſs prohibition, *Mat.* 7. 1. *Judg not*, and that back'd with a ſevere penalty, *that ye be not judged?* As God hath appropriated vengeance to himſelf, ſo has he Judicature alſo; and 'tis an invaſion of his peculiar, for any (but his Delegates the lawful Magiſtrates) to pretend to either. And indeed in all private Judgments, ſo much depends upon the intention of the Offender, that unleſs we could poſſeſs our ſelves of Gods Omniſcience, 'twill be as irrational as impious to aſſume his Autority. Until we know mens hearts, we are at the beſt but imperfect Judges of their actions. At our rate of judging St. *Paul* had ſurely paſs'd for a moſt malicious Perſecutor, whereas God ſaw he *did ignorantly in unbelief*, and upon that intuition had *mercy on him*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. 'Tis therefore good counſel which the Apoſtle gives, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *Judg nothing before the time until the Lord come.* For tho 'tis ſaid *the Saints ſhall judg the world*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 3. yet it muſt be at the great Aſſize, and he that will needs intrude himſelf into the office before the time, will be in danger to be rather Paſſive then Active in the Judicatory. I do not here adviſe to ſuch a ſtupid charity, as ſhall make no diſtinction of actions. I know there is a wo pronounc'd as well to thoſe who *call evil good, as good evil.* Surely when we ſee an open notorious ſin committed, we may expreſs a deteſtation of the Crime, tho not of the Actor; nay it may ſomtimes be a neceſſary Charity, both to the Offender, and to the innocent Spectators, as an Amulet to keep them from the Contagion of the Example. But ſtill even in theſe caſes, our Sentence muſt not exceed the evidence, we muſt judg only according to the viſible undoubted circumſtances, and not aggravate the crime upon preſumtions and conjectures; if we do, how right ſoever our gueſſes may be, our judgment is not, but we are as St. *James* ſpeaks, *Judges of evil thoughts*, Chapter 2. v. 4.

This practice of judging is an invaſion of Gods right of Judicature.

'Tis adviſable to remit all judgment of our neighbors to the great aſſize.

25. Indeed this raſh judging is not only very unjuſt both to God and man, but it is an act of the greateſt pride. When we ſet our ſelves in the Tribunal, we alwaies look down with contemt on thoſe at the Bar. And certainly there is nothing do's ſo gratify, ſo regale a haughty humor, as this piece of uſurpt Soveraignty over our brethren: but the more it do's ſo, the greater neceſſity there is to abſtain from it. Pride is a hardy kind of vice, that will live upon the bareſt paſture: you cannot ſtarve it with the moſt induſtrious mortifications: how little need is there then of pampering and heightning it? which we cannot more effectually do, then by this cenſorious humor: for by that we are ſo perpetually emploi'd abroad, that we have no leiſure to look homeward, and ſee our own defects. We are like the inhabitants of *Ai*, *Joſhua* 8. ſo eager upon our purſuit of others, that we leave our ſelves expos'd to the ambuſhes of Satan, who will be ſure ſtill to encourage us in our chaſe, draw us ſtill farther and farther from our ſelves, and cares not how zealous we are in fighting againſt the crimes of others, ſo he can but keep that zeal from recoiling upon our own.

Cenſuring is the effect of Pride.

26. Laſtly this judging others is one of the higheſt violations of Charity. The Apoſtle gives it as one of the properties of that grace, that *it*

Is the higheſt violation of Charity.

thinks no evil, (i. e.) is not apt to make ſevere conſtructions, but ſets every thing in the faireſt light, puts the moſt candid interpretations that the matter will bear. And truly this is of great importance to the reputation of our neighbors. The world we know is in many inſtances extremely govern'd by opinion, but in this 'tis all in all; it has not only an influence upon it, but is that very thing: reputation being nothing but a fair opinion and eſtimation among others. Now this opinion is not alwaies ſwaied by due motives: ſomtimes little accidents, and often fancy, and ofteſt prepoſſeſſion governs in it. So that many times he that puts the firſt ill Character, fixes the ſtamp, which afterwards goes currant in the world. The generality of people take up prejudices (as they do religions) upon truſt: and of thoſe that are more curious in enquiring into the grounds, there are not many who vary on the more charitable hand, or bring the common ſentence to review, with intent to moderate but inhance it. Men are apt to think it ſome diſparagement to their acuteneſs and invention, if they cannot ſay ſomthing as ſharp upon the ſubject, as hath bin ſaid before; and ſo 'tis the buſineſs of many to lay on more load, but of few to take off: and therefore he that paſſes the firſt condemnatory ſentence, is like the incendiary in a popular tumult, who is chargeable with all thoſe diſorders to which he gave the firſt riſe, tho that free not his Abettors from their ſhare of the guilt.

And moſt inexcuſable partiality.

27. And as this is very uncharitable in reſpect of the injury offer'd, ſo alſo is it in reflection on the grand rule of Charity. Can we pretend to love our neighbors as our ſelves, and yet ſhall our love to him have the quite contrary effects to that we bear our ſelves? Can ſelf-love leſſen our beam into a mote, and yet can our love to him magnify his mote into a beam? No certainly, true Charity is more ſincere, do's not turn to us the reverſe end of the perſpective, to repreſent our own faults at a diſtance, and in the moſt diminutive ſize, and yet ſhuffle the other to us when we are to view his. No, theſe are Tricks of Legerdemain we learn in another School, even his whoſe ſtile is *the accuſer of the brethren.* We know how frequently God proteſts againſt falſe weights and falſe meſures. And ſure 'tis not only in the ſhop or market that he abhors them, they are no leſs abominable in converſation then in traffic. To buy by one meſure and ſell by another, is not more unequal, then it is to have theſe differing ſtandards for our own and our neighbors faults, that our own ſhall weigh, in the Prophet Jeremies Phraſe, *lighter then vanity, yea nothing*, and yet his (tho really the lighter) ſhall prove *Zacharies* talent of lead. This is ſuch a partiality, as conſiſts not with common honeſty, and can therefore never be reconcil'd with Chriſtian Charity: and how demurely ſoever ſuch men may pretend to ſanctity, that interrogation of Gods preſſes hard upon them, *Shall I count them pure with the wicked ballances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? Micah 6.* 11. Such bitter invectives againſt other mens faults, and indulgence or palliation of their own, ſhews their zeal lies in their ſpleen, and that they conſider not ſo much what is done, as who do's it: and to ſuch the ſentence of the Apoſtle is very applicable, *Rom.* 2. 1. *Therefore thou art inexcuſable, O man, whoſoever thou art that judgeſt, for wherein thou judgeſt another thou condemneſt thy ſelf, for thou that judgeſt doſt the ſame thing.* But admit a man have not the very ſame guilts he cenſures in another, yet 'tis ſure every man has ſome, and of what ſort ſoever they be, he deſires not they ſhould be rigorouſly ſcan'd, and therefore by the rule of Charity, yea and juſtice too, ought not to do that which he would not ſuffer. If he can find extenuations

tenuations for his own crimes, he is in all reaſon to preſume others may have ſo for theirs: the common frailty of our nature, as it is apt alike to betray us to faults, ſo it gives as equal ſhare in the excuſe; and therefore what I would have paſs for the effect of impotency or inadvertence in my ſelf, I can with no tolerable ingenuity give a worſe name to in him.

28. We have now view'd both theſe branches of Detraction, ſeen both the ſin and miſchiefs of them, we may now join them together in a concluding obſervation, which is, that they are as imprudent as they are unchriſtian. It has bin receiv'd among the Maxims of civil life, not unneceſſarily to exaſperate any body; to which agrees the advice of an ancient Philoſoper, Speak not evil of thy neighbor, if thou do'ſt, thou ſhalt hear that which will not fail to trouble thee. There is no Perſon ſo inconſiderable, but may at ſome time or other do a diſpleſure: but in this of Defaming men need no harneſſing, no preparation; every man has his weapons ready for a return: ſo that none can ſhoot theſe arrows, but they muſt expect they will revert with a rebounded force: not only to the violation of Chriſtian Unity (as I have before obſerv'd) but to the Aggreſſors great ſecular detriment, both in fame, and oftentimes intereſt alſo. Revenge is ſharp-ſighted, and over-looks no opportunity of a retaliation, and that commonly not bounded as the Levitical ones were, *An eie for an eie, a tooth for a tooth*, *Exod.* 21. 24. no nor by the larger proportions of their reſtitutions *four-fold*, *Exod.* 22. 1. but extended to the utmoſt power of the inflicter. The examples are innumerable of men who have thus laid themſelves open in their greateſt concerns, and have let looſe the hands as well as Tongues of others againſt them, merely becauſe they would put no reſtraint upon their own: which is ſo great indiſcretion, that to them we may well apply that of *Solomon*, *A fools mouth is his deſtruction, and his lips are the ſnare of his ſoul.*

Detraction is as imprudent as it is unchriſtian.

29. And now who can ſufficiently wonder, that a practice that ſo thwarts our intereſt of both worlds, ſhould come univerſally to prevail among us? Yet that it do's ſo, I may appeal to the conſciences of moſt, and to the obſervation of all. What ſo common Topic of diſcourſe is there, as this of backbiting our neighbors? Come into company of all Ages, all Ranks, all Profeſſions, this is the conſtant entertainment: And I doubt he that at night ſhall duly recollect the occurrences of the day, ſhall very rarely be able to ſay, he has ſpent it without hearing or ſpeaking (perhaps both) ſomwhat of this kind. Nay even thoſe who reſtrain themſelves other liberties, are often apt to indulge to this: many who are ſo juſt to their neighbors property, that as *Abraham* once ſaid, *Gen.* 14. 23. *they would not take from him, even from a thred to a ſhoe latchet*, are yet ſo inconſiderate of his Fame, as to find themſelves diſcourſe at the expence of that, tho infinitly a greater injury then the robbing of his Coffer: which ſhew's what falſe meſures we are apt to take of things, and evinces that many of thoſe, who have not only in general abjur'd the world in their Baptiſm, but do in many inſtances ſeem to themſelves (as well as others) to have gain'd a Superiority over it; do yet in this undiſcernably yield it the greateſt Enſign of Soveraignty, by permitting it to ſet the Standards and eſtimates of things, and taking its cuſtomary Preſcriptions for Laws. For what beſides this unhappy ſervility to cuſtom, can poſſibly reconcile men that own Chriſtianity, to a practice ſo widely diſtant from it? 'Tis true, thoſe that profeſs themſelves men of this world, who deſign only their portion in this life, may take it up as

This generally prevailing practice would excuſe it ſelf, by the pretence of zeal againſt vice.

ſomtimes conducing (at leaſt ſeemingly) to their end: but for thoſe who propoſe higher hopes to themſelves, and know that Charity is one of the main props to thoſe hopes, how fooliſhly do they undermine themſelves, when they thus act againſt their principles, and that upon no other Autority, but that of popular uſage? I know men are apt to excuſe themſelves upon their indignation againſt vice, and think that their zeal muſt as well acquit them for this violation of the Second Table, as it once did *Moſes* for the breaking both, *Exod.* 32. 19. But to ſuch I may anſwer in Chriſt's words, *Luke* 9. 55. *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit you are of.* Meekneſs and Charity are the Evangelical graces, which will moſt recommend and aſſimilate us to him, who was *meek and lowly* in heart. But after all this pretext of Zeal, I fear it is but a cheat we put on our ſelves, the Elder brothers raiment only to diſguiſe the Supplanter, *Gen.* 27. Let men truly ranſack their own breaſts, and I doubt the beſt will find there is ſomthing of vanity which lies at the bottom, if it be not the poſitive ſort mention'd before, of deſigning to illuſtrate my ſelf by others blemiſhes, yet at leaſt the negative, that I am unwilling to incur the contemt incident to thoſe, who ſcruple at ſmall ſins. Beſides I obſerve perhaps, that 'tis the common entertainment of the world, to Defame their neighbors, and if I ſtrike not in upon that Theme, I ſhall have nothing to render me acceptable company; perhaps I ſhall be reproch'd as moroſe or dull, and my ſilence ſhall be conſtrued to proceed not from the abundance of my Charity, but the defect of my Wit.

And vainly ſets up for wit.

30. But ſure they that can thus argue, do hereby give a more demonſtrative proof of that defect. He whoſe wit is ſo precarious that it muſt depend only upon the folly or vice of another, had beſt give over all pretence to it. He that has nothing of his own growth to ſet before his gueſts, had better make no invitations, then break down his neighbors encloſure, and feaſt them upon his plunder. Beſides, how pitiful an atteſtation of wit is it, to be able to make a diſgraceful relation of another? No ſcolding woman but may ſet up ſuch Trophies: and they that can value a man upon ſuch an account, may prefer the Scarabe's, who feed upon dung, and are remark'd by no other property, before the Bee that ſucks flowers and returns hony.

Chriſtianity requires greater ſelf-denials then the reproch of wanting wit.

31. But in the next place admit this reſtraint ſhould certainly expoſe one to that reproch; methinks this ſhould be no news to thoſe who know the condition of Chriſtianity is to take up the Croſs: and ſure it cannot weigh lighter then in this inſtance. What am I the worſe if a vain Talkative Perſon think me too reſerv'd? Or if he, whoſe frolic levity is his diſeaſe, call me dull, becauſe I vapor not out all my ſpirits into froth? *Socrates* when inform'd of ſome derogating Speeches one had uſed of him behind his back, made only this facetious reply, Let him beat me too when I am abſent. And he that gets not ſuch an indifference to all the idle cenſures of men, will be diſturb'd in all his civil tranſactions, as well as his Chriſtian: it being ſcarce poſſible to do any thing, but there will be deſcants made on it. And if a man will regard thoſe winds, he muſt, as *Solomon* ſaies, *never ſow*, *Eccleſ.* 11. 4. He muſt ſuſpend even the neceſſary actions of common life, if he will not venture them to the being misjudged by others.

He who upon the deſpicable motive of applauſe will commit one ſin, will commit more.

32. But there is a yet farther conſideration in this matter: for he that upon ſuch a deſpicable motive will violate his duty in one particular, lets Satan get a main point of him, and can with no good Logic deny to do it in others. Detraction is not the only ſin in faſhion: Profaneſs, and Obſcenity,

Obſcenity, and all ſorts of Luxury are ſo too, and threaten no leſs reproch to thoſe who ſcruple at them. Upon the ſame grounds therefore that he diſcards his Charity to his neighbor, he may alſo his Piety, his Modeſty, his Temperance, and almoſt all other Vertues. And to ſpeak the truth, there is not a more fertile womb of ſin, then this dread of ill mens reproch. Other corruptions muſt be gratifi'd with coſt and induſtry, but in this the Devil hath no farther trouble then to laugh men out of their ſouls. So prolific a vice therefore had need be weeded out of mens hearts: for if it be allowed the leaſt corner, if it be indulged to in this one inſtance, 'twill quickly ſpread it ſelf farther.

Hatred will rather be the effect of Defamation then applauſe.

33. Yet after all, this fear of reproch is a mere fallacy, ſtarted to diſguiſe a more real cauſe of fear: for the greater danger of reproch do's indeed lie on that other ſide. Common eſtimation puts an ill Character upon pragmatic medling people. For tho the inquiſitiveneſs and curioſity of the hearer, may ſomtimes render ſuch diſcourſe grateful enough to him, yet it leaves in him no good impreſſions of the ſpeaker. This is well obſerv'd by the Son of *Sirach*, *Eccluſ.* 19. 8, 9. *Whether it be to friend or foe, talk not of other mens lives; and if thou canſt without offence reveal them not, for he heard and obſerv'd thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee.* In a word all conſidering Perſons will be ever upon their guard in ſuch company, as foreſeeing that they will talk no leſs freely of them, then they do of others before them. Nor can the commonneſs of the guilt obviat the cenſure, there being nothing more frequent then for men to accuſe their own faults in other Perſons. Vice is like a dark Lanthorn, which turns it bright ſide only to him that bears it, but looks black and diſmal in anothers hand: and in this particular none has ſo much reaſon to fear a Defamer, as thoſe who are themſelves ſuch: for (beſides the common prudential motive) their own conſciouſneſs gives them an inward alarm, and makes them look for a retribution in the ſame kind. Thus upon the whole matter we ſee, there is no real temtation, even to our vanity, to comply with this uncharitable cuſtom, we being ſure to loſe more repute by it then we can propoſe to our ſelves to gain. The being eſteem'd an ill man will not be ballanced by the being thought pleſant ingenious company, were one ſure to be ſo. But 'tis odds that will not be acquired by it neither, for the moſt aſſiduous talebearers and bittereſt revilers are often half-witted people: there being nothing more frequently obſervable, then ſuch mens aptneſs to ſpeak evil of things they underſtand not, *Jude* v. 2.

Defamation is moſt ſcandalous when it proceeds from men otherwiſe vertuous.

34. O let not then thoſe that have repudiated the more inviting ſins, ſhew themſelves philter'd and bewitch'd by this, but inſtead of ſubmiting to the ill example of others, ſet a good one to them, and endeavor to bring this unchriſtian cuſtom out of faſhion! I am ſure if they do not, they will be more deeply chargeable then others: for the more command they have over their other corruptions, the more do they witneſs againſt themſelves. Their remiſneſs and willing ſubjection to this, beſides their example when ill, is more enſnaring then other mens, and is apt to inſinuate eaſy thoughts of the ſin. Men are apt to think themſelves ſafe while they follow one of noted piety, and the autority of his Perſon often leads them blindfold into his failings. Thus when *Peter* diſſembled, St. *Paul* tells us that the other *Jews, and even* Barnabas *alſo was carried away with his diſſimulation*, *Galat.* 2. 13. And I doubt not in this particular many are encourag'd by the liberty they ſee even good men take. So that ſuch have a more accumulative guilt, for they do not only commit,

mit, but patronize the fault: the conſideration whereof has kept me, I confeſs, longer upon this head then is proportionable to the brevity of the reſt; but I think not longer then agrees to the importance of the ſubject.

A ſin which do's ſo eaſily beſet, muſt with greater vigilance be reſiſted.

35. And now ſince we have conſider'd the malignity of this ſin of Detraction, and yet withall find that 'tis a ſin, which, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *doth ſo eaſily beſet us*, 'tis but a natural Corollary that we enforce our vigilance againſt it. And where the importance and difficulty are both ſo great, 'twill be a little neceſſary to conſider what are the likelieſt means, the moſt appropriate Antidote againſt this ſo dangerous, and yet ſo Epidemic a diſeaſe.

This leproſy in the Tongue is to be cured not by topical applications, but alterative medicines.

36. And here the common rule of Phyſic is to be adverted to, *viz.* to examine the cauſes, that the remedies may be adapted to them. I ſhall therefore in the firſt place deſire every man ſeriouſly to ſtudy his own conſtitution of mind, and obſerve what are his particular temtations to this ſin of Detraction, whether any of thoſe I have before mention'd, as Pride, Envy, Levity, *&c.* or any other which lies deeper, and is only diſcernible to his own inſpection. Let him, I ſay, make the ſcrutiny, and then accordingly apply himſelf to correct the ſin in its firſt principle. For as when there is an eruption of Humor in any part, 'tis not cured merely by outward applications, but by ſuch alterative Medicines as purify the blood; ſo this Leproſy of the Tongue will ſtill ſpread farther, if it be not check'd in its Spring and ſource, by the mortifying of thoſe corrupt inclinations, which feed and heighten it.

In all Detraction there is ſome mixture of Pride.

37. This is an inquiſition I muſt leave to every mans own Conſcience, which alone can teſtify by what impulſes he acts. Yet as the Rabbies were wont to ſay, that in every Signal Judgment which befel the Jews, there was ſome grain of the Golden-calf: ſo I think I may venture to ſay, that in all Detraction, there is ſome mixture of Pride: and therefore I ſuppoſe, a Caution againſt that, will be ſo generally ſeaſonable, that it may well lead the Van of all other advices in this matter. And here 'tis very obſervable, that God who has *made of one blood all Nations of the Earth*, *Acts* 17. has ſo equally diſtributed all the moſt valuable priviledges of Human nature, as if he deſign'd to preclude all inſulting of one man over another. Neither has he only thus inſinuated it by his Providence, but has enforc'd it by his commands. In the Levitical Law we find what a particular care he takes to moderate the vigor of Judicial correction, upon this very account, leſt *thy Brother be deſpiſed in thine eies*, *Deut.* 25. 3. So unreaſonable did he think it, that the crime or miſery of one, ſhould be the exultation of another. And St. *Paul* brands it as a great guilt of the *Corinthians*, that they upon the occaſion of the inceſtuous Perſon *were puffed up, when they ſhould have mourned*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. When we ſee a dead Corps, we are not apt to inſult over it, or brag of our own health and vigor; but it rather damps us, and makes us reflect, that it may (we know not how ſoon) be our own condition. And certainly the Spectacles of Spiritual mortality ſhould have the ſame operation. We have the ſame principles of Corruption with our lapſed Brethren, and have nothing but Gods grace, to ſecure us from the ſame effects, and by theſe inſulting reflections forfeit that too; for *he gives grace only to the humble*, *James* 4. 6. St. *Paul*'s advice therefore is very appoſite to this caſe *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leaſt thou alſo be temted.* In a word the falls of others ought to excite our pity towards them, our caution

caution as to our ſelves, and our thankfulneſs to God, if he hath hitherto preſerv'd us from the like, *For who made thee to differ from another?* 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. But if we ſpread our Sails, and triumph over theſe wrecks, we expoſe our ſelves to worſe. Other ſins like Rocks may ſplit us, yet the lading may be preſerv'd; but Pride like a Gulf ſwallows us up: our very vertues when ſo levened, becoming weights and plummets to ſink us to the deeper ruin. The counſel therefore of the Apoſtle, is very pertinent to this matter, *Rom.* 11. 20. *Be not high minded, but fear.*

In all temtations to Detraction, it ought to be the firſt reflexion if we are not likewiſe obnoxious.

38. But God knows we can inſult over others when we are not only under a poſſibility, but are actually involv'd in the ſame guilt: and then what are all our accuſations and bitter cenſures of others, but indictments and condemnatory ſentences againſt our ſelves? And we may juſtly expect God ſhould take us at our word, and reply upon us as the Prophet did upon *David, Thou art the man.* For tho our officious vehemence againſt anothers crime, may blind the eies of men, yet God is not ſo mock'd: as therefore when a thief or murderer is detected, it gives an alarm to the whole confederacy; ſo when we find our own guilts purſu'd in other mens Perſons, 'tis not a time for us to join in the proſecution, but rather by humble and penitent reflections on our ſelves to provide for our own ſafety. When therefore we find our ſelves (upon any miſdemeanor of our brother) ready to mount the tribunal, and pronounce our ſentence, let us firſt conſider how competent we are for the office, calling to mind the deciſion Chriſt once made in the like caſe, *He that is without ſin let him firſt caſt a ſtone, John* 8. 7. And if we did this, many perhaps of our fierceſt impeachers, would think fit to retire and leave the delinquent (as they themſelves finally deſire to be) to the merciful indulgence of a Savior. In ſhort, would we but look into our own hearts, we ſhould find ſo much work for our inquiſition and cenſure, that we ſhould not be at leiſure to ramble abroad for it. And therefore as *Lycurgus* once ſaid to one, who importun'd him to eſtabliſh a popular parity in the State, Do thou, ſaies he, begin it firſt in thine own family; ſo I ſhall adviſe thoſe that will be judging, to practice firſt at home. And if they will confine themſelves to that, till there be nothing left to correct, I doubt not their neighbor will be well enough ſecur'd againſt their Detractions.

'Twill alſo import, to conſider the future judgment.

39. Another preſervation againſt that ſin is the frequent contemplation of the laſt and great judgment. This is indeed a Catholicon againſt all: but we find it particularly appli'd by St. *Paul* to this, of judging and deſpiſing our Brethren, *Why doſt thou judg thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? We ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt. Rom.* 14. 10. That is the great day of Revelation and Retribution, and we are not to anticipate that by our private inqueſts or ſentences: we have buſineſs enough to provide our own accounts againſt that day. And as it were a ſpightful folly for Malefactors that were going together to the bar, to ſpend their time in exaggerating each others crimes; ſo ſurely it is for us, who are all going toward that dreadful tribunal, to be drawing up Charges againſt one another. And who knows but we may then meet with the fate of *Daniel*'s accuſers, ſee him we cenſur'd acquit, and our ſelves doom'd. The penitence of the criminal may have numbred him among the Saints, when our unretracted uncharitableneſs may ſend us to unquenchable Flames. I conclude this conſideration with the words of St. *James, There is one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy, who art thou that judgeſt another? James* 4. 12.

If we muſt talk of others faults, let it be not to Defame, but admoniſh.

40. A third expedient may be, to try to make a revulſion of the humor, to draw it into another channel. If we muſt needs be talking of other peoples faults, let it not be to Defame, but to amend them, by converting our Detraction and backbiting into Admonition and fraternal correption. This is a way to extract medicine out of the viper, to conſecrate even this ſo unhallow'd a part of our temper, and to turn the ungrateful medling of a buſy-body, into the moſt obliging office of a friend. And indeed had we that zeal for vertue, which we pretend when we inveigh againſt vice, we ſhould ſurely lay it out this way, for this only gives a poſſibility of reforming the offender. But alas we order the matter ſo, as if we fear'd to loſe the occaſion of Clamor, and will tell all the world but him that it moſt concerns. Indeed 'tis a deplorable thing to ſee how univerſally this neceſſary Chriſtian duty is neglected; and to that neglect we may in a great degree impute that ſtrange overflowing of Detraction among us. We know the receiving any thing into our Charge, inſenſibly begets a love and tenderneſs to it (a Nurſe upon this account comes often to vie kindneſs with the Mother:) and would we but take one another thus into our care, and by friendly vigilance thus watch over each others ſouls, 'tis ſcarce imaginable what an endearment it would create: ſuch certainly as would infallibly ſupplant all our unkind reportings, and ſevere deſcants upon our brethren; ſince thoſe can never take place, but when there is at leaſt an indifference, if not an enmity.

A farther remedy will be to ſuppreſs Curioſity.

41. The next cure I ſhall propoſe for Detraction, is to ſubſtract its nouriſhment, by ſuppreſſing all Curioſity and inquiſitiveneſs concerning others. Were all Supplies thus cut off, it would at laſt be ſubdued. The King of *Ethiopia* in a vie of Wit with the King of *Egypt*, propos'd it as a Problem to him, to drink up the Sea, to which he repli'd, by requiring him firſt to ſtop the acceſs of Rivers to it: and he that would drain this other Ocean, muſt take the ſame courſe, dam up the avenues of thoſe Springs which feed it. He that is alwaies upon the ſcent, hunting out ſome diſcovery of others, will be very apt to invite his neighbors to the Quarry; and therefore 'twill be neceſſary for him, to reſtrain himſelf from that range: not like jealous States, to keep Spies and Penſioners abroad to bring him intelligence; but rather diſcourage all ſuch officious pick-thanks: for the fuller he is of ſuch informations, the more is his pain if he keep them in, and his guilt if he publiſh them. Could men be perſwaded to affect a wholſome ignorance in theſe matters, it would conduce both to their eaſe and innocence: for 'tis this Itch of the Ear, which breaks out at the Tongue: and were not Curioſity the Purveior, Detraction would ſoon be ſtarv'd into a tameneſs.

T'e making our neighbors condition our own, is a farther remedy.

42. But the moſt infallible receit of all, is the frequent recollecting, and ſerious applying of the grand rule, of doing as we would be done to: for as Detraction is the violation of that, ſo the obſervation of that muſt certainly ſupplant Detraction. Let us therefore when we find the humor fermenting within us, and ready to break out in Declamations againſt our Brethren, Let us, I ſay, check it with this ſhort queſtion, Would I my ſelf be thus uſed? This voice from within, will be like that from heaven to St. *Paul*, which ſtopt him in the height of his carrier, *Acts* 9. 4. And this voice, every man may hear, that will not ſtop his ears, or gag his conſcience, it being but the Echo of that native Juſtice and Equity which is implanted in our hearts: and when we have our remedy ſo near us, and will not uſe it, God may well expoſtulate with us, as he did with the Jews, *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Ezra 33. 11.

43. Theſe

43. Theſe are ſome of thoſe many receits which may be preſcrib'd againſt this ſpreading diſeaſe. But indeed there is not ſo much need to multiply remedies, as to perſwade men to apply them. We are in love with our Malady, and as loth to be cured of the Luxury of the Tongue, as St. *Auguſtine* was of his other Senſuality, againſt which he Prayed with a Caveat, that he might not be too ſoon hear'd. But 'tis ill dallying, where our Souls are concern'd: for alas 'tis they that are wounded by thoſe darts, which we throw at others. We take our aim perhaps at our Neighbors, but indeed hit our ſelves: herein verifying in the higheſt Senſe that Axiom of the Wiſe man, *He that diggeth a pit, ſhall fall into it; and he that roleth a ſtone, it ſhall return upon him, Prov.* 26.27. If therefore we have no tenderneſs, no relentings to our Brethren, yet let us have ſome to our ſelves, ſo much compaſſion, nay ſo much reſpect to our precious immortal Souls, as not to ſet them at ſo deſpicable a price, to put them in balance with the ſatisfying of a petulant peeviſh vanity. Surely the ſhewing our ſelves ill-natur'd (which is all the gains Detraction amounts to) is not ſo enamouring a deſign, that we ſhould ſacrifice to it our higheſt intereſt. 'Tis too much to ſpend our breath in ſuch a purſuit, O let not our ſouls alſo exhale in the vapor, but let us rather pour them out in Praiers for our brethren, then in accuſations of them: for tho both the one and the other will return into our own boſoms, yet God knows to far differing purpoſes, even as differing as thoſe wherewith we utter them. The Charity of the one like kindly exhalations will deſcend in ſhowers of bleſſings, but the rigor and aſperity of the other, in a ſevere doom upon our ſelves: for the Apoſtle will tell us, *He ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy, James* 2. 13.

The greateſt difficulty is to be in earneſt in the deſire of a cure.

SECT. VII.

Of Scoffing and Deriſion.

1. THERE is alſo another fault of the Tongue injurious to our Neighbor, and that is Deriſion and Mockery; the ſtriving to render others as ridiculous and contemtible as we can. This in reſpect of the ſubject matter differs from the other of Detraction, as much as folly or deformity do's from vice: yet ſince injuries as well as benefits are to be meſured by common eſtimation, this may come in balance with the other. There is ſuch a general averſation in human nature to contemt, that there is ſcarce any thing more exaſperating. I will not deny but the exceſs of that averſation may be level'd againſt Pride, yet ſure ſcorn and diſdain never ſprung from Humility, and therefore are very incompetent Correctors of the other; ſo that it may be ſaid of that, as once it was of *Diogenes*, that he trampled on *Plato*'s Pride with greater of his own.

Scoffing has folly and deformity for its object, as Detraction has vice.

2. Nor is this injury enhanced only by the reſentment of the ſufferer, but alſo by the way of inflicting it. We generally think thoſe are the ſevereſt marks of infamy, which are the moſt indelible. To be burnt in the hand or Pilloried, is a more laſting reproch then to be ſcourged or confin'd; and it is the ſame in this caſe, for here commonly Wit is the Lictor, which is arm'd with an edg'd tool, and leaves ſcars behind it.

A ſcoff imprints indelible Characters.

The reproch of rage and fury ſeem to be writ in Chalk or Lead, which a diſpaſſionate hearer eaſily wipes out, but thoſe of Wit are like the Gravers burine upon Copper, or the corrodings of Aqua-fortis, engrave and indent the Characters that they can never be defaced. The truth of this daily experience atteſts. A dull contumely quickly vaniſhes, no body thinking it worth remembring; but when 'tis ſteel'd with Wit, it pierces deep, leaves ſuch impreſſions in the fancy of the hearers, that thereby it gets rooting in the memory, and will ſcarce be eradicated: nay ſomtimes it happens to ſurvive both ſpeaker and hearer, and convey's it ſelf to poſterity; it being not unuſual for the ſarcaſms of Wit to be tranſmitted in ſtory. And as it thus gives an edg, ſo alſo do's it add wings to a reproch, makes it fly abroad in an inſtant. Many a poor mans infirmities had bin confin'd to the notice of a few Relations or Neighbors, had not ſome remarkable ſtrein of Drollery ſcatter'd and diſpers'd them. The jeſt recommends the Defamation, and is commonly ſo incorporate with it, that they cannot be related apart. And even thoſe who like it not in one reſpect, yet are many times ſo tranſported with it in the other, that they chuſe rather to propagate the contumely, then ſtifle the conceit. Indeed Wit is ſo much the *Diana* of this age, that he who goes about to ſet any bounds to it muſt expect an *uproar*, *Acts* 19. 28. or at leaſt to be judged to have impoſed an envious inhibition on it, becauſe himſelf has not ſtock enough to maintain the trade. But however ſharp or unexpected the cenſure may ſeem to be, yet 'tis neceſſary that plain downright truth ſhould ſomtimes be ſpoken, and I think that will bear me out, if I ſay that 'tis poſſible men may be as oppreſſive by their parts, as their power; and that God did no more deſign the meaner intellectuals of ſome for triumphs to the Pride and Vanity of the more acute, then he did the poſſeſſions of the leſs powerful, as a prey to the rapine and avarice of the mighty.

Quickneſs of Wit cannot be more perverted, then in Deriſion.

3. And this ſuggeſts a yet farther aggravation of this ſin, as it is a perverting of Gods deſign; an abuſe of the talent he has committed to their truſt. Ingenuity and quickneſs of parts, is ſure to be reckon'd in the higheſt ranks of Bleſſings, an inſtrument proper for the moſt excellent purpoſes; and therefore we cannot ſuppoſe the Divine wiſdom, ſo much ſhort of Human, as not in his intention to aſſign it to uſes worthy of it. Thoſe muſt relate either to God, our Selves, or our Neighbors. In reſpect of God, it renders us more capable of contemplating his Perfections, diſcerning the Equity and Excellence of his Laws, and our obligations to obedience. In regard of our Selves, it makes us apprehend our own intereſt in that obedience; makes us tractable and perſwaſible, contrary to that Brutiſh ſtubbornneſs of the *Horſe and Mule*, which the Pſalmiſt reproches, *Pſal.* 32. 9. Beſides it accommodates us in all the concerns of Human life, forms it ſelf into all thoſe uſeful contrivances, which may make our being here more comfortable: eſpecially it renders a man company to himſelf, and in the greateſt dearth of Society, entertains him with his own thoughts. Laſtly, as to our Neighbors, it renders us uſeful and aſſiſtant. All thoſe diſcoveries and experiments, thoſe Arts and Sciences, which are now the common treſure of the world, took their firſt riſe from the ingenuity of particular Perſons: and in all Perſonal exigencies wherein any of us are at any time involv'd, we need not be told the uſefulneſs of a wiſe adviſer. Now all theſe are emploiments commenſurable to the faculty from whence they flow, and that anſwer its excellence and value; and he that ſo beſtows his talent, gives a good

good account of his truſt. But I would fain know under which of theſe Heads Deriſion of our Neighbors comes in: certainly not under that of being aſſiſtant to him. It would be a ſorry relief to a poor indigent wretch, to laviſh out wit upon him, in upbraiding of his miſery. And is not this a parallel caſe? Is it not the ſame Barbariſm, to mock and reproch a man that wants the gifts of Nature, as him that wants thoſe of Fortune? Nay perhaps it may be more; for a Beggar may have impoveriſht himſelf by his own fault, but in Natural defects there is nothing to be charged, unleſs we will fly higher, and arraign that Providence that hath ſo diſpenſed. In a word, as the Superfluities of the Rich are by God aſſign'd as the Store-houſe of the Poor, ſo the Abilities of the Wiſe are of the Ignorant: for 'tis a great miſtake, to think our ſelves Stewards in ſome of Gods gifts, and Proprietors in others. They are all equally to be emploied, according to the deſignation of the Donor, and there is nothing more univerſally deſign'd by him, then that mankind ſhould be equally helpful to one another. Thoſe therefore whom God hath bleſt with higher degrees of ſagacity and quickneſs, ought not to look down on others as the objects of their contemt or ſcorn, but rather of their care and pity, endeavoring to reſcue them from thoſe miſchiefs, to which their weakneſs may expoſe them, remembring ſtill, that God might have changed the Scene, and made themſelves what they ſee others. It is part of *Job*'s juſtification of his integrity, that he was *eies to the Blind, and feet to the Lame*, *Job* 29. 15. (*i.e.*) he accommodated his aſſiſtances to all the wants and exigencies of others: and ſure 'tis no leſs the part of a good man to do it in the Mental then in the Corporeal defects.

Laughing is as much the property of the Idiot as of the Wit.

4. But alas many of us would rather put a ſtumbling block in the way of the Blind, pull away the Crutch from the Lame, that we may ſport our ſelves to ſee them tumble: ſuch a ſenſuality we have in obſerving and improving the imperfections of others, that it is become the grand excellence of the Age to be Dexterous at it, and Wit ſerves ſome men for little elſe. We are got indeed into a merry world, Laughing is our main buſineſs; as if becauſe it has bin made part of the Definition of a man, that he is Riſible, his man-hood conſiſted in nothing elſe. But alas if that be all the uſe men have of their underſtandings, they were given them to little purpoſe, ſince mere Idiots can laugh with as much pleſure, and more innocence then they; and it is a great inſtance how extremes may be brought to meet, that the exceſs of Wit in the one, and of Folly in the other, ſerve but to produce the ſame effect.

Deriſion goes on to make ſerioufneſs and ſobriety to be foppery: and then ſcoff at them.

5. Yet ſo voracious is this humor now grown, that it draws in every thing to feed it. There is not game enough from the real folly of the world, and therefore that which is the moſt diſtant from it muſt be ſtampt with its mark. 'Tis a known ſtory of the Frier, who on a faſting day bid his Capon be Carp, and then very Canonically eat it; and by ſuch a tranſubſtantiating power our Wits bid all ſeriouſneſs and conſideration be formality and foppery, and then under that name endeavor to hunt it out of the world. I fear moral honeſty fares not better with ſome of them then moral prudence. The old Philoſophical vertues of Juſtice, Temperance, and Chaſtity, are now hiſt off the ſtage, as fit only for that Antiquated ſet of Actors; and he that appears in that Equipage, is by many thought more ridiculous, then he that walks the ſtreet in his Anceſtors trunk-hoſe. Nay indeed vice it ſelf is ſcarce ſecure if it have not the grand accompliſhment of impudence: a pure bluſhing ſinner is to be

laught out of his Modeſty, tho not out of his ſin; and to be proof againſt their ſcorns, he muſt firſt be ſo againſt all the regrets of his own mind.

Nor do's it ſtop there, but flies in the face of piety.

6. And if mere Ethnic vertue, or ſhamefac'd vice have this treatment, Chriſtian Piety muſt expect worſe: and ſo indeed it finds, its Profeſſors being beyond all others expos'd to their ſcorn and contemt. Nor is it ſtrange it ſhould be ſo, ſuch men being *made*, as it is *Wiſd.* 2. 14. *to reprove their waies*, they think in their own defence they are to deride theirs. This is it indeed which gives a ſecret ſting and venom to their reproches: other men they abuſe as an exerciſe of their Wit, but theſe in defence of their Party. So *Julian* after his Apoſtacy, thought it a more effectual way to perſecute the Chriſtians by taunts and ironies, then by racks and tortures, as thinking it more poſſible to ſhame, then fright them out of their religion. And the ſtratagem ſeems to have bin reaſſumed by many in this age, and I fear with too great ſucceſs: for I doubt not there are divers who have herded themſelves amongſt theſe profane Scoffers, not that they are convinced by their reaſons, but terrified by their contumelies; and as ſome *Indians* are ſaid to worſhip the Devil, that he may not hurt them, ſo theſe chuſe to be active, that they may not be paſſive in the contemts flung upon religion: ſuch men forget the dreadful denunciation of Chriſt againſt thoſe that ſhall *be aſhamed of him and his words*, *Matth.* 8. 38.

This entertainment the Prophets and Apoſtles and our Savior had from the world.

7. As for thoſe who, upon a juſter eſtimate, find the advantages of Piety worthy to be choſen, and take it with all its acceſſory ignominies, they have the encouragement of very good company in their ſufferings. The Pſalmiſt long ago had his ſhare, when not only *Thoſe that ſate in the gate ſpeak againſt him, but the drunkards made ſongs upon him*, *Pſal.* 69. 12. 'Twas alwaies the Prophet *Jeremies* complaint, *I am in Deriſion daily, every one mocketh me*, *Jer.* 20. 7. Nay our bleſſed Lord himſelf was derided in his life by the Phariſees, *Luke* 16. 14. mocked and reviled at his death by the Prieſts, the Elders, the Soldiers, nay by caſual Paſſengers, *Matth.* 27. 39. And ſhall the ſervant think himſelf greater then his Lord? Shall a Chriſtian expect an immunity from what his Savior has born before him? (He that do's ſo, is too delicate a member for a crucified head.) No ſure, let us rather animate our ſelves, as the Apoſtle exhorts, by *conſidering him who* as well *deſpiſed the ſhame*, as *endured the croſs* for us, *Heb.* 12. 2. and who has not only given an example, but propoſed a reward, a Beatitude for thoſe who are *reviled for righteouſneſs ſake*, *Matth.* 5. 11. And when this is ſoberly ponder'd, 'twill ſure make it eaſy for us to reſolve with holy *David* in a like caſe, *I will be yet more vile*, 2 Sam. 6. 22.

Scoffing is a mean and ſcurrilous, as well as highly criminal practice.

8. But to return from this digreſſion to thoſe who thus unhappily employ their parts, let me propoſe to them, that they would borrow every day ſome few minutes from their mirth, and ſeriouſly conſider, whether this be (I need not ſay a Chriſtian, but) a manly exerciſe of their faculties. Alas when they have rallied out the day from one company to another, they may ſum up their account at night in the wiſe mans ſimile, their *Laughter has bin like the crackling of thorns under a pot*, Ecclus. 6. 7. made a little briſk noiſe for the preſent, and with the ſparcles perhaps annoid their Neighbors, but what reall good has it brought to themſelves? All that they can fancy is but the repute of Wit: but ſure that may be more attainable ſome other way. We find the World affected to new things, and this of Deriſion and abuſe of others is ſo beaten a road, that perhaps the very variety of a new way would render it acceptable. They are the lighter

ſubſtances

ſubſtances that ſtill ſwim away with the ſtream, the greater and more ſolid bodies do ſometimes ſtop the current: and ſure twere a noble eſſay of a mans parts to ſtem this tide, and by a more uſeful application of their own faculties, convince others that theirs might be better emploi'd. Tis ſaid of *Anacharſis*, that at a feaſt he could not be got to ſmile at the affected railleries of common Jeſters, but when an ape was brought in he freely laught, ſaying, an ape was ridiculous by nature, but men by art and ſtudy. And truly tis a great contemt of humane nature to think their intellects were given them for no better end, then to raiſe that laughter which a brute can do as well or better.

9. I would not be thought to recommend ſuch a Stoical ſowerneſs, as ſhall admit of nothing of the chearful pleaſant part of Converſation. God has not ſure bin more rigid to our Minds then to our Bodies: and as he has not ſo devoted the one to toil, but that he allows ſome time to exerciſe them in recreation as well as labor, ſo doubtleſs he indulges the ſame relaxation to our Minds, which are not alwaies to be ſcrued up to the height, but allowed to deſcend to thoſe eaſineſſes of Converſe, which entertain the lower faculties of the Soul. Nor do I think thoſe are ill emploid in thoſe little skirmiſhes of Wit, which paſſes familiarly between intimates and acquaintances, which beſides the preſent divertiſment, ſerve to whet and quicken the Fancy. Yet I conceive this liberty is to be bounded with ſome cautions: as firſt in theſe encounters, the Charge ſhould be powder not bullets, there ſhould nothing be ſaid, that ſhould leave any ungrateful impreſſions, or give any umbrage of a ſpightful intent. The world wants not experiments of the miſchiefs have hapned by too ſevere Railleries: in ſuch Fencings jeſt hath proved earneſt, and Florets have turn'd to Swords, and not only the Friendſhip, but the men have fallen a Sacrifice to a Jeſt.

There may be innocent skirmiſhes of wit, but then they muſt not fight at ſharps.

10. Secondly this is to have the ſame reſtriction with all other recreations, that it be made a divertiſement, not a trade. Tis an inſinuating thing, and is apt to encroach too much upon our time, and God knows we have a great deal of buſineſs in this world, and much more for the next, which will not be done with laughing: and therefore tis not for us to play away too much of that time, which is exacted by more ſerious concerns. Tis ſure we ſhall die in Earneſt, and it will not become us, to live altogether in Jeſt. But beſides this ſtealth of our time, tis apt to ſteal away mens hearts too, make them dote ſo upon this kind of entertainment, that it averts them from any thing more ſerious. I beleive I may appeal to ſome who have made this their buſineſs, whether it go not againſt the hair with them to ſet to any thing elſe, and having eſpouſed this as their one excellence, they are willing to decry all others, that they may the more value themſelves upon this. By this means it is, that the gift of Raillery has in this age, like the lean Kine, devoured all the more ſolid worthy qualifications, and is counted the moſt reputable accompliſhment. A ſtrange inverted eſtimate, thus to profer the little ebullitions of Wit, before ſolid reaſon and judgment. If they would accommodate their Diet at the ſame rate, they ſhould eat the Husk, rather than the Kernel, and drink nothing but froth and bubbles. But after all, Wiſdom is commonly at long running juſtified even of her Deſpiſers; theſe great Idolaters of Wit often daſhing themſelves upon ſuch Rocks, as make them too late wiſh, their Sails had bin leſs, and their Ballaſt more. For the preventing therefore of more ſuch wrecks, I wiſh the preſent caution may be more adverted

Alſo it muſt be diverſion, not trade.

adverted to, not to beſtow an unproportionable part of our time or value on this ſlight exerciſe of mans ſlighteſt Faculty.

Alſo confin'd to perſons preſent.

11. A third Caution in this matter, is to confine our ſelves to preſent Company, not to make abſent Perſons the Subject of our mirth. Thoſe freedoms we uſe to a mans face, as they are commonly more moderate, ſo they are more equitable, becauſe we expoſe our ſelves to the like from him; but the back-blows are diſingenuous, and give ſuſpition we intend not a fair trial of Wit, but a cowardly murder of a mans fame. 'Twas the precept of the Philoſopher, *Deride not the abſent*, and I think it may well be ſo of the Politician: there being nothing more imprudent as to our civil concerns than the contrary liberty. For thoſe things never die in the company they are firſt vented in (nay perhaps the hearer is not willing his wit ſhould ſo ſoon expire;) and when they once take air, they quickly come to the notice of the derided Perſon, and then nothing in the world is more diſobliging. 'Twas a ſober precept given one, not ſo much as to laugh in compliance with him that derides another, for you will be hated by him he derides. And if an acceſſory be hated, ſure much more the principal: and I think I may ſay there are many can ſooner forgive a ſolemn deep contrivance againſt them, than one of their jocular reproches: for he that deſigns, ſeems to acknowledg them conſiderable, but he that mocks them, ſeems to think them too low for any thing but contemt: and we learn from Ariſtotle, that the meſure of anger is entirely taken thence, men being ſo far provoked, as they imagine they were ſlighted or affronted. In mere ſecular wiſdom it will therefore become men to conſider, whether this trade be like to turn to account, or whether it be worth the while, at once to make a jeſt and an enemy.

Scoffing has this reward that it makes God and men its enemies.

12. And if it be imprudent to make man our enemy, 'tis much more to make God ſo by levelling our blowes at any thing ſacred: but of that I have already had occaſion to ſpeak, and ſhall not repete; only give me leave to ſay, that beſides the profaner ſorts of jeſts, which more immediately reflect on him, he is concern'd in all the unjuſt reproches of our brethren, our love to them being confirm'd by the ſame divine Sanction with our reverence to him: and ſure nothing is more inconſiſtent with that love, than the expoſing them to that contemt we are our ſelves ſo impatient of. In a word what repute ſoever this practice now has of Wit, it is very far from wiſdom to provoke God that we may alſo diſoblige man: and if we will take the Scripture eſtimate, we ſhall find a Scorner is no ſuch honourable an Epithet as we ſeem to account it. *Solomon* do's almoſt conſtantly ſet it in oppoſition to a Wiſe man: thus it is, *Prov.* 9. 8. and again Cap. 13. 1. and many other places; and on the other ſide, cloſely links it with the Fool: and that not only in title, but in puniſhment too, *Judgments are preparing for ſcorners, and ſtripes for the back of fools*, Prov. 19. 29. So that if our Wits think not *Solomon* to dull for their Cabal, we ſee what a turn he will give to their preſent verdict.

Eſpeci lly when beyond the oſtentation of wit, it deſigns the doing miſchief.

13. And if theſe reproches, which aim only at oſtentation of Wit, be ſo unjuſtifiable, what ſhall we ſay to thoſe, that are drawn with blacker lines, that are founded in Malice and Envy, or ſome undermining deſign? Every man that is to be ſupplanted cannot alwayes be attaqued with a down-right battery: perhaps his integrity may be ſuch, that, as 'twas ſaid of *Daniel* Chap. 6. 4. *they can find no occaſion againſt him:* and when they cannot ſhake the main Fort, they muſt try if they can poſſeſs themſelves of the out-works, raiſe ſome prejudice againſt his diſcretion, his

his humor, his carriage, and his moſt extrinſic adherence, and if by repreſenting him ridiculous in any of theſe they can but abate mens reverence to him, their confidence of him will not long hold out: bare honeſty without ſome other adornment, being lookt on as a leaf-leſs tree, no body will truſt himſelf to its ſhelter. Thus theenemies of *Socrates*, when they could no other waies ſuppreſs his reputation, hired *Ariſtophanes* a Comic Poet to perſonate him on the ſtage, and by the inſinuation of thoſe interludes, inſenſibly conveied firſt a contemt, then a hatred of him into the hearts of the people. But I need not bring inſtances of former times in this matter, theſe being ſufficiently verſt in that myſtery.

14. It is not ſtrange that men of ſuch deſigns, ſhould ſummon all their Wit to the ſervice, make their Railleries as picquant as they can, that they maywound the deeper: but me thinks tis but a mean office they aſſign their Wit, to be (I will not ſay the Pander, that being in this age ſcarce a title of reproch, but) the executioner or hangman to their malice. Chriſt bids us *be wiſe as Serpents*, yet adds withall *harmleſs as Doves*; but here the Serpent has quite eat up the Dove, and puts a Vulture in the place, a creature of ſuch ſagacity and diligence in purſuit of the prey, that tis hard for any art or innocence to eſcape its talons. *Hereby wit is put to the vile office of being hangman to malice.*

15. There is yet another ſort of Contumelious Perſons, who indeed are not chargeable with that circumſtance, of ill employing their Wit, for they uſe none in it. Theſe are people whoſe ſole talent is Pride and Scorn; who perhaps have attained the Sciences of dreſſing themſelve finely, and eating well, and upon the ſtrength of thoſe excellencies, look faſtidiouſly, and ſpeak diſdainfully of any who want them, concluding if a man fall ſhort of their Garniture at the Knees and Elbowes, he is much inferior to them in the Furniture of his Head. Such people think crying, Oh ridiculous! is an ample Confutation of any thing can be ſaid, and ſo they can but deſpiſe enough, are contended not to be able to ſay why they do ſo. Theſe are, I confeſs, the moſt innocent kind of Deriders in reſpect of others, what they ſay having not edg enough to cauſe any ſmart. The greateſt hurt they do is to themſelves, who tho they much need, yet are generally little capable of a reſcue, and therefore I ſhall not clog the preſent diſcourſe, with any adviſe to them: I ſhall chuſe rather to conclude, with enforcing my Suit to the former, that they would ſoberly and ſadly weigh the account they muſt one Day give of the emploiment of their Parts, and the more they have hitherto embeazled them, the more to endeavor to expiate that Unthriftineſs, by a more careful Managery for the future; that ſo inſtead of that vain, emty, vaniſhing Mirth they have courted here, they may find a real, full, and eternal Satisfaction in the Joy of their Lord. *The moſt inſipid Scoffers, are the ſupercilious & faſtidious.*

SECT. VIII.

Of Flattery.

1. THe laſt of Verbal injuries to our Neighbor which I ſhall mention, is Flattery. This is indeed the fatalleſt wound of the Tongue, carries leaſt Smart, but infinitly more of Danger, and is as much inferior to the former, as a Gangrene is to a Gall or Scratch; this may be ſore and vexing, but that ſtupifying and deadly. Flattery is ſuch a Myſtery, ſuch a Riddle of iniquity, that its very ſoftneſſes are its cruelleſt rigor, its Balm *Flattery is the moſt fatal wound of the Tongue.*

§ T corrodes,

corrodes, and (to compriſe all in the Pſalmiſts excellent Deſcription) *its words are ſmoother then oil, and yet be they very Swords.* Pſal. 56. 21.

As diſhonorable to the agent as miſchievous to the patient.

2. But beſides the miſchiefs of it to the Patient, tis the moſt diſhonoring, the moſt vilifying thing to the Agent. I ſhall not need to impannel a Jury either of Moraliſts or Divines, every mans own breaſt ſufficiently inſtructing him in the unworthineſs of it. 'Tis indeed a collective accumulative Baſeneſs, it being in its Elements a compound and a complex of the moſt ſordid, hateful qualities incident to Mankind. I ſhall inſtance in three, viz. Lying, Servility, and Treachery, which being deteſtably deform'd ſingle, muſt in Conjunction make up a loath ſome Monſtrous guilt. Now tho Flattery has two Branches, yet theſe lie ſo at the Root, as equally to influence both: for whether you take it as it is the giving of praiſe where it is not due, or the profeſſing of kindneſs which is not reall, theſe Properties are ſtill its Conſtitutive parts.

Lying is its Principal ingredient.

3. And firſt we may take Lying to be the very corner Stone of the Fabric; for take it away, and the Whole falls to the ground. A Paraſite would make but a lean trade of it, that ſhould confine himſelf to truth. For tho tis poſſible ſo to order the manner and circumſtances, as to flatter even in the repreſenting a mans reall vertues to him, yet commonly if they do not falſify as to the kind, they are forc'd to do it as to the degree. Beſides as there are but few ſuch ſubjects of Flattery, ſo neither are men of that Worth ſo receptive of it. Such ſort of addreſſes are leſs dangerous to thoſe who have the perſpicuity to ſee thro them: ſo that theſe Merchants are under a neceſſity of dealing with the more ignorant Chapmen, and with them their conterfeit wares will go off beſt. It is indeed ſtrange to conſider, with what groſs impudent falſhoods men of this trade will court their Patrons. How many in former ages have not only amaſt together all ſublunary excellences, but have even ranſacked heaven to ſupply their Flattery, Deified their Princes, and perſwaded them they were Gods, who at laſt found they were to die like men? And tho this ſtrein be now out-dated, yet perhaps tis not that the vice is grown more modeſt, but that Atheiſm has rob'd it of that Topic. Thoſe that believe no God, would rather ſeem to annihilate then magnify the Perſon to whom they ſhould apply the title. But I do not find that the practice has any other bounds. A great mans vices ſhall ſtill be called vertues, his deformities, beauties, and his moſt abſurd follies, the height of ingenuity. Such a ſubtil Alchymiſt is this Paraſite, that he turns all he touches into gold, imaginary indeed as to the deluded Perſon, but oft-times reall to himſelf. Nor is Lying leſs material to the other part of Flattery, the Profeſſion of ſervice and kindneſs. This needs no evidencing, and to attemt it would be a ſelf-Confutation: for if thoſe Profeſſions be true, they are not Flattery; therefore if they be Flattery, they muſt needs be Lies. It will be almoſt as needleſs to expatiate on the Baſeneſs and meaneſs of that ſin; for tho there is no Subject that affords more matter for Declamation, yet Lying is a thing that is aſhamed of it ſelf, and therefore may well be remitted to its own convictions. Tis *Ariſtotles* obſervation, that all Elements but the Earth, had ſome Philoſopher or other, that gave it his vote to be the firſt productive Principle of all things: and I think we may now ſay, that all Crimes have had their Abettors and fautors, ſome body that would ſtand up in their defence; only Lying is ſo much the dregs and refuſe of wickedneſs, that none has yet had Chymiſtry enough to ſublimate it, to bring it into ſuch a reputation, that any man will think fit to own it: the greater wonder that what is under ſo univerſal a reproch,

reproch, ſhould be ſo commonly admitted in practice. But by this we may make an eſtimate, what the whole body of Flattery is, when in one limb of it we find ſo much corruption.

4. A ſecond is Servility and Abjectneſs of humor: and of this there needs no other proof than has bin already given; this charge being implicitly involv'd in the former of Lying, the condeſcending to that being a mark of a diſingenuous ſpirit. And accordingly the nobler Heathen lookt on it as the vice of Slaves and vaſſals, below the liberty of a free man, as well as an honeſt. But tho I need no other evidence to make good the accuſation, yet every Sycophant furniſhes me with many ſupernumerary proofs. Look upon ſuch a one, and you ſhall ſee his eies immoveably fixt on his Patrons face, watching each look, each glance, and in every change of his countenance (like a ſtar-gazer) reading his own deſtiny, his ears chain'd (like gally-ſlaves at the oar) to his dictate, ſucking in the moſt inſipid diſcourſes with as much greedineſs, as if they were the Apothegms of the ſeven Sages, his Tongue tuned only to Panegyrics and acclamations, his feet in a winged motion upon every nod or other ſignification of his pleſure: in a word, his whole body (as if it had no other ſpirits then what it derived from him) varies its poſtures, its exerciſes, as he finds agreeable to the humor he is to ſerve. And can humanity contrive to debaſe it ſelf more? Yes it can, and do's too often, by enſlaving its Diviner part too, taking up not only opinions, but even crimes alſo in compliance, playing the incarnate Devil, and helping to act thoſe villanies which Satan can only ſuggeſt: and if this be not a ſtate of abject ſlavery, ſure there is none in the world. *Plutarch* tells us, that *Philoxenus* for deſpiſing ſome dull Poetry of *Dionyſius*, was by him condemned to dig in the quarries; from whence being by the mediation of friends remanded, at his return *Dionyſius* produced ſome other of his verſes, which as ſoon as *Philoxenus* had read, he made no reply, but calling to the waiters, ſaid, *Let them carry me again to the quarries.* And if a heathen Poet could prefer a corporeal ſlavery before a mental, what name of reproch is lowd enough for them, who can ſubmit to both, in purſuit of thoſe poor ſordid advantages they project by their Flatteries. Nor is this baſeneſs more obſervable in theſe mean fawnings and obſervancies, then it is in the proteſtations of Kindneſs and Friendſhip. Love is the greateſt gift any man has to beſtow, and Friendſhip the ſacredeſt of all morall bonds: and to proſtitute theſe to little pitiful deſigns, is ſure one of the baſeſt cheats we can put upon our common nature, in thus debaſing her pureſt and moſt currant coin, which by theſe frequent adulterations is become ſo ſuſpected, that ſcarce any man knows what he receives. But Chriſtian Charity is yet worſe uſed in the caſe: for that obliging to all ſincerity, is hereby induced to give gold for droſs, exhibite that *Love indeed and in truth*, which is returned only *in word and in tongue*, 1 John 3. 18. And ſo it do's in thoſe who obſerve its rules: but in thoſe who own, yet obſerve them not, 'tis yet a greater ſufferer, by laboring under the ſcandal of all their diſſimulations. It was once the Character given Chriſtians, even by their enemies, *Behold how they love one another*, but God knows we may now be pointed out by a very differing mark, *Behold how they deceive and delude one another.* And ſure this violation we herein offer to our religion, do's not allay but aggravate the baſeneſs of this practice: for if in the other we ſell our ſelves, in this we ſell our God too, ſacrifice our intereſt in him to get a ſurreptitious title to the favor of a man.

It involves ſervility and abjectneſs of mind.

And this I conceive do's in the ſecond place not much commend the art of Flattery which is built up of ſo vile materials.

And alſo treachery.

5. And to compleat this infamous compoſition, in the third place Treachery comes in; a crime of ſo odious a kind, that to name it is to implead it: yet how intrinſic a part this is of Flattery, will need no great skill to evidence, daily experience ſufficiently doing it. 'Tis a common obſervation of Flatterers, that they are like the Heliotrope, open only towards the Sun, but ſhut and contract themſelves at night, and in cloudy weather. Let the object of their adoration be but eclipſed, they can ſee none of thoſe excellencies which before dazled their eies: and how ever inconſtant they may be in it to others, they are indeed very conſtant to themſelves, true to their fixt principle, of courting the greatneſs not the man; in purſuit whereof their old Idol is often made a ſacrifice to their new: all malicious diſcovery is made of their falling friend, to buy an intereſt in the riſing one. Of this there are ſuch crouds of examples in Story, that it would be impertinent to ſingle out any, eſpecially in an age that is fitter to furniſh preſidents for the future, than to borrow of the paſt times. But ſuppoſing the Paraſite not actually guilty of this baſe revolt, (which yet he ſeldom fails to be upon occaſion) yet is he no leſs Treacherous even in the height of his Blandiſhments, and while he moſt courts a man, he do's the moſt ruinouſly undermine him. For firſt he abuſes him in his underſtanding, precludes him from that which wiſe men have judged the moſt eſſential part of Learning, the knowledg of himſelf from which 'tis the main buſineſs of a Flatterer to divert him. And to this abuſe there is another inevitably conſequent: for this ignorance of his faults or follies, neceſſarily condemns him to the continuing in them, it being impoſſible for him to think of correcting either the one or the other, who is made believe he has neither. This is like the treachery of a bribed officer in a Garriſon, who will not let the weak parts be fortified, and laies the man as open to aſſaults, as the Town. Yet this is not all, he do's not only provide for the continuance, but the improving of his crimes and errors, which alas are too prolific of themſelves, but being cultivated and manured with perpetual ſoothings and encouragements, grow immeſurably luxurious. And accordingly we ſee that men uſed only to applauſes, are ſo ſwell'd with them, that their inſolencies are intolerable. And this they are ſometimes taught to their coſt, when they happen among free men, who will not ſubmit to all they ſay, nor commend all they do. And finding theſe uneaſy contradictions when they come abroad, they are willing to retire to their moſt complaiſant company: and ſo this Sycophant Devil having once got them within his circle, may enchant them as he pleaſes, lead them from one wickedneſs to another. And as *Caligula* and other voluptuous Emperours, by being adored as Gods, ſunk in their ſenſuality below the Nature of man, ſo theſe celebrated Perſons are by that falſe veneration animated to all thoſe reprochful practices, which may expoſe them to a real contemt: their follies, as well as their vices ſtill get head, till they anſwer the deſcription Wiſe man gives of the old Giants, *Who fall away in the ſtrength of their fooliſhneſs.* Eccluſ. 16. 7.

Which is enhanc'd by being acted under the diſguiſe of friendship.

6. And ſure he that betraies a man to all theſe miſchiefs, may well be thought perfidious. But that which infinitly amplifies and enhances the Treachery is, that all this is acted under the notion and diſguiſe of a friend; a relation ſo venerable, that methinks 'tis the neereſt ſecular tranſcript of the treaſon, which is ſtoried of thoſe who have adminiſtred

Poiſon

Poiſon in the Euchariſt. The name of a friend is ſuch an endearment, as nothing human can equal. All other natural or civil ties take their greateſt force from this. What ſignifies an unfriendly Parent, or Brother, or Wife? Tis friendſhip only that is the cement which really and effectively combines mankind: and therefore we may obſerve, that God reckoning up other relations, illuſtrates them by ſeveral notes of endearment, but when he comes to that of friendſhip, tis *the friend who is as thine own ſoul*, Deut. 13. 6. nothing below the higheſt inſtance was thought expreſſive enough of that union. What a Legion of Fiends then poſſeſſeth men that can break theſe chains Matth. 5. 4. nay that can hammer and forge thoſe very chains into Daggers and Stillettoes, and make their friendſhip an engine of ruine. This ſure is the blackeſt color wherein we can view a Paraſite his falſe light makes the ſhadow the more diſmal: as the Ape has a peculiar deformity above other brutes by that aukward and ungraceful reſemblance he has to a man, ſo ſure a Flatterer is infinitely the more hateful for being the ugly counterfeit of a Friend. And as this Treachery lies at the bottom of the Panegyrics, ſo alſo do's it of all the careſſes and exuberant kindneſſes of a Flatterer, which if they aimed not at any particular end of circumvention, muſt yet in the generall be Treacherous by being falſe. A man lookes on the love of his friend as one of his richeſt poſſeſſions (upon which account the Philoſopher thought friends were to be inventoried as well as goods.) What a defeat and diſcomfiture is it to a man, when he comes to uſe this wealth, to find it all falſe mettle, ſuch as will not anſwer any of thoſe purpoſes for which he depended on it. There cannot ſure be a greater Treachery, then firſt to raiſe a confidence and then deceive it. But beſides this fundamental falſeneſs, there are alſo many incidental Treacheries, which fall in upon occaſion of particular deſigns. A pretence of kindneſs is the univerſal ſtale to all baſe projects: by this men are rob'd of their fortunes, and women of their honor: in a word all the wolfiſh deſigns walk under this ſheeps clothing, and as the world goes, men have more need to beware of thoſe who call themſelves friends, then thoſe who own themſelves enemies.

Nothing is ſo odious as a barefaced Flatterer.

7. Theſe are the lineaments of this vice of Flattery, which ſure do together make up a face of moſt extreme deformity. I might upon a true account add another, and charge it with folly too. I am ſure according to the Divine eſtimate it is alwaies ſo: and truly it do's not ſeldom prove ſo in the ſecular alſo. Men of this art do ſometimes drop their vizard before they have got the prize, and then there is nothing in the world that appears ſo contemtible, ſo ſilly; a barefaced Flatterer being every bodies ſcorn. The ſhort is, wherever this game is plaied, there is alwaies a fool in the caſe: if the Paraſite be detected, it falls to his ſhare: if he be not, to his whom he deludes. But at the beſt tis but ſubtilty and cunning he can boaſt of, and if he can in his own fancy raiſe that to the opinion of true wiſdom, tis a ſign he is come round to practice his deceits upon himſelf, and is as much his own Flatterer as he has bin others.

Tis ſtrange ſo diſingenuous a practice ſhould be found with perſons of condition.

8. And now I know not whether it be more ſhame or wonder, to ſee that men can ſo put off ingenuity, and the native greatneſs of their kind, as to deſcend to ſo baſe, ſo ignoble a vice: yet alas we daily ſee it don, and that not only by the ſcum and refuſe of the people, ſuch as *Job* ſpeaks of, *who are viler then the earth*, chap. 30. 8. but by Perſons of all conditions. Flattery like a ſpring forc'd upwards aſcends, as cares are by the wiſe man ſaid to deſcend, Eccleſ. 40. 4. *from him that weareth a linen frock to him that weareth a crown:* all intermedial degrees are but like pipes, which as they

ſuck from below, ſo tranſmit it ſtill upwards. There are few ſo low but find ſome body to cajole and Flatter them. Some intereſt or other may ſometimes be to be ſerved even upon the meaneſt, and thoſe that find themſelves thus ſolicited for benefits, are eaſily taught by it how to addreſs to their immediate ſuperiors, from whom they expect greater: and as 'tis thus handed from one rank to another, the art ſtill is more ſubtilized and refined (God help poor Princes the while, who commonly meet with the Elixir, and quinteſſence of this venom:) and thus it paſſes thro all ſtates and conditions: as they are paſſive on the one ſide, and are Flattered by ſome, ſo they are active on the other, and Flatter others.

An evidence to what a low ebb, not only Chriſtianity, but generoſity is grown.

9. I ſay all conditions, I do not ſay all Perſons in thoſe conditions, for no truly generous ſoul can ſtoop ſo low: but 'tis too evident to what a low ebb Generoſity as well as Chriſtianity is grown, by the numbers of thoſe who thus degrade themſelves, every little petty intereſt being thought worth theſe baſe ſubmiſſions. And truly it is hard to find, by what Topic of perſwaſion to aſſault ſuch men. The meaneſs, or the ſin will ſcarce be diſſwaſives to thoſe who have reconciled themſelves to both: if any thing can be pertinently ſaid to them, it muſt be upon the ſcore of Intereſt, for that being their grand principle, they can with no pretence diſclaime the inferences drawn thence.

'Twere worth conſider ng what return can be expreſſed, to the price paid down by the Flatterer.

10. Let them therefore duely ballance the advantages they project from this practice with the miſchiefs and dangers of it. What they expect, is commonly either Honor or Wealth, theſe they hope may be acquired by their proſtrations to thoſe, who can diſpenſe or procure them. 'Tis true, as Honor ſignifies Greatneſs and power, it is ſometimes attain'd by it, but then as it ſignifies Reputation and eſteem, 'tis as ſure to be loſt. He that thus aſcends, may be lookt on with fear, but never with reverence. Now I think 'tis no good bargain to exchange this ſecond notion of Honor for the firſt, for beſides the difference in the intrinſic value, 'tis to be conſider'd how tottering a Pinacle unmerited Greatneſs is. He that rais'd him to ſatisfy his humor at one time, can (with more eaſe and equal juſtice) throw him down at another: and when ſuch a man do's fall, he falls as without pity, ſo without remedy, has no foundation on which to rebuild his fortune: his Sycophanting arts being detected, that Game is not to be plaid the ſecond time, whereas a man of a clear reputation, tho his barque be ſplit, yet he ſaves his Cargoe, has ſomething left towards ſetting up again, and ſo is in capacity of receiving benefit not only from his own induſtry, but the friendſhip of others. A ſound piece of Timber, if it be not thought fit for one uſe, yet will be laid by for another: and an honeſt man will probably at one time or other be thought good for ſomething.

The deſign of getting wealth is as unfortunat as the hope of favor.

11. As for the other aim, that of Wealth, 'tis very poſſible that may ſometimes be compaſſed; and well it may, the Flatterer, having ſeveral Springs to feed it by. For he that has a great Patron, has the advantage of his countenance and Authority, he has that of his bounty and liberality, and he has another (ſometimes greater then both) that of his negligence and deceivableneſs. But yet all theſe acquiſitions, are many times like Fairy mony, what is brought one night, is taken away the next. Men of this mold ſeldom know how to bear proſperity temperately, and it is no new thing to ſee a Privadoe carry it ſo high, as to awake the jealouſy of his promoter, which being aſſiſted by the buſy induſtry of thoſe who envy his fortune, 'twill be eaſy enough to find ſome flaw in his Gettings, by which to unravel the whole Web: an event that has bin oft

experi-

experimented not only in the private managery of Families, but in the most Public administrations. And these are such hazards, that laid all together would much recommend to any the Moral of *Horace's* Fable, and make one chuse the country Mouses plain fare with safety, rather then the delicacies of the City with so much danger. This then is the state of the prosperous Parasite: but alas how many are there who never arrive to this, but are kickt down ere they have climb'd the two or three first rounds of the Ladder, whose designs be so humble, as not to aspire above a Major-Domo, or some such domestic preferment, (for in this trade there are adventurers of all sizes?) but upon all these considerations, methinks it appears no very inviting one to any. At the long run an honest freedom of speech will more recommend a man, then all these sneaking flatteries: we have a very wise mans word for it, *he that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favor, then he that flattereth with his lips.* Prov.28. 23.

The suppression of flattery will most depend on those whom tis addrest.

12. But after all that hath or can be said, the suppression of Flattery will most depend upon those Persons to whom it is addrest: if it be not repulsed there, nothing else will discourage it, and if it be, 'tis crusht in the egg, and can produce no viper. These Vultures prey only on carcasses, on such stupid minds, as have not life and vigor enough to fray them away. Let but Persons of quality entertain such customers with a severe brow, with some smart expression of dislike, those Leeches will immediatly fall off. In *Sparta* when all Laws against theft prov'd ineffectual, at last they fixt the penalty on them that were rob'd, and by that did the business: and in the present case, if twere made as infamous to be flatter'd as tis to flatter, I believe it might have the like effect. Indeed there is pretence enough to make it so: for first as to Wit, the advantage is clear on the Flatterers side: he must be allowed to have more of that (which in this age is more then a counterpoise to honesty) and as for vertue, the balance (as to the principle motive,) seems to hang pretty even, tis the vice of Avarice that temts the one to Flatter, and the vice of Pride that makes it acceptable to the other. The truth is, there is the bottom of the matter: tis that secret confederate within, that exposes men to those assaults from without. We have generally such an appetite to praise, that we greedily suck it in without staying to examine whether it belong to us or no, or whether it be design'd as a kindness or an abuse. Other injuries rush upon us with violence, and give us notice of their approch: they may be said to come *like water into our bowels*; *but this like oil into our bones*, Psal. 109. penetrates easily, undiscernably, by help of that native propension we have to receive it. Tis therefore the near concern of all, especially of those whose quality most exposes them, to keep a guard upon that treacherous inmate, not to let that step into the scale to make a base Sycophant outweigh a true friend, and when ever they are attacqued with extravagant Encomiums, let them fortify themselves with this Dilemma, either they have those excellences they are praised for, or they have not: if they have not, tis an apparent cheat and gull, and he is of a pitiful forlorn understanding that delights to be fool'd: but if they have, they are too good to be exposed to such worms who will instantly wither the fairest gourd, Jon. 4. 7.

No vertue can subsist with flattery.

For as it is said of the *Grand Signior*, that no grass growes where his horse once treads: so we may say of the Flatterer, no vertue ever prospers where he is admitted: if he find any, he hugs it till he stifles it; if he find none, he so indispose the soil, that no future seeds can ever take root. In fine, he is a mischief beyond the description of any Character. O let not

not men then act this part to themſelves by being their own Paraſites, and then twill be an eaſy thing to eſcape all others!

SECT. IX.

Of Boaſting.

The Tongue as inordinat towards God & the neighbor, as alſo to a mans ſelf.

1. WE have now ſeen ſome effects of an ungovern'd Tongue, as they relate to God and our Neighbor. There is yet a third ſort which reflect upon a mans ſelf. So unboundedly miſchievous is that petulant member, that heaven and earth are not wide enough for its range, but it will find work at home too; and like the viper, that after it had devoured its companions, prei'd upon its ſelf, ſo it corrodes inward, and becomes often as fatal to its owner, as to all the world beſides.

Of this ſort, are all impudent ſpeeches.

2. Of this there are as many inſtances, as there are imprudent things ſaid, for all ſuch have the worſt reflection upon the ſpeaker: and therefore all that have given rules for civil life, have in order to it, put very ſevere reſtraints upon the Tongue, that it run not before the judgment. Twas the advice of *Zeno*, to *dip the Tongue in the mind* before one ſhould permit it to ſpeak. *Theophraſtus* uſed to ſay, *It was ſafer truſting to an unbridled horſe, then to intemperate ſpeech.* And daily experience confirms the Aphoriſm for thoſe that ſet no guard upon their Tongues are hurried by them into a thouſand indecencies, and very often into reall conſiderable miſchiefs. By this means men have proved their own delators, diſcover'd their own moſt important ſecrets: and whereas their heart ſhould have kept a lock upon their Tongue, they have given their Tongue the key of their heart, and the event has bin oft as unhappy as the proceeding was prepoſterous. There are indeed ſo many waies for men to looſe themſelves in their talk that I ſhould do the like, if I ſhould pretend to trace them. Beſides my ſubject leads me not to diſcourſe Ethically, but Chriſtianly of the faults of the Tongue, and therefore I have all along conſidered the one no farther then it happens to be twiſted with the other.

Boaſting is a mixture of vice and folly.

3. In the preſent caſe I ſhall inſiſt only upon one fault of the Tongue, which partakes of both kinds, and it is at once a vice and a folly, I mean that of Boaſting and vaunting a mans ſelf: a ſtrein to which ſome mens tongues have a wonderful glibneſs. No diſcourſe can be adminiſtred, but they will try to turn the Tide, and draw it all into their own Channel, by entertaining you with long ſtories of themſelves: or if there be no room for that, they will at leaſt ſcrew in here and there ſome intimations of what they did or ſaid. Yea ſo ſtupid a vanity is this, that it works alike upon all materialls: not only their greater and more illuſtrious acts or ſentences, but even their moſt ſlight and trivial occurrencies, by being theirs, they think acquire a conſiderableneſs, and are forcibly impoſed upon the company: the very dreams of ſuch people ſtrait commence propheſy, and are as ſeriouſly related, as if they were undoubted revelations. And ſure if we reflect upon our Saviors rule, that *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh*, we cannot but think theſe men are very full of themſelves, and to be ſo, is but an other phraſe for being very Proud. So 'tis Pride in the heart, which is the ſpring that feeds this perpetual current at the mouth, and under that notion we are to conſider it.

4. And

4. And truly there is nothing can render it more infamous, Pride being a vice that of all others is the most branded in Scripture as most detestable to God, and is signalized by the punishment to be so. This turned *Lucifer* out of Heaven, *Nebuchadnezar* out of his Throne, nay out of Humane society. And indeed it seems still to have something of the same effect, nothing rendring a man so unconversible; for it sets him above the meaner sort of company, and makes him intolerable to the better, and to compleat the parallel, he seldom comes to know himself till he be turn'd a grazing, be reduced to some extremities. *Men full of themselves & pride are therely made boasters.*

5. But this boasting arrogant humor, tho alwaies bad, yet is more or less so according to the Subject on which it works. If it be only on Natural excellences, as Beauty, Wit; or accidental acquisitions, as Honor, Wealth, or the like, yet even here 'tis not only a Theft, but a Sacriledg; the glory of those being due only to the Donor, not to the receiver, there being not so much as any prediſposition in the Subject to determine Gods bounty. He could have made the most deformed Beggar as handsom and as rich, as those who most pride themselves in their wealth and beauty. No man fancies himself to be his own Creator, and tho some have assumed to be the Architects of their own fortunes, yet the frequent defeats of mens industry and contrivance, do sufficiently confute that bold pretence, and evince that there is something above them, which can either blast or prosper their attemts. What an invasion then is it of Gods right, to ingross the honor of those things being don, which were not at all in their power to do? And sure the folly is as great in respect of men, as the sin is towards God. This boasting like a heavy Nurse, overlaies the Child, the vanity of that quite drowns the notice of the things in which 'tis founded, and men are not so apt to say, such a man is Handsom, Wise, or Great, as that he is proud upon the fancy of being so. In a word he that celebrates his own excellences, must be content with his own applauses, for he will get none of others, unless it be from those fawning Sycophants, whose praises are worse then the bittereſt Detraction. *Boasting of natural or acquir'd advantages is sacrilege.*

6. And yet so sottish a vice is Pride, that it can make even those insidious Flatteries matter of boast, which is a much more irrational object of it then the former. How eagerly do some men propagate every little Encomium their Parasites make of them? With what gust and sensuality will they tell how such a Jest of theirs took, or such a Magnificence was admired? 'Tis pleasant to see what little Arts and dexterities they have to wind in such things into discourse: when alas it amounts to no more then this, that some have thought them fools enough to be flatter'd, and 'tis odds but the hearers will think them enough so to be laught at. *The vice is so sottish to be gratified by flattery.*

7. But there is yet another Subject of Boasting more foolish, and more criminal too then either of the former; and that is when men vaunt of their Piety, which if it were true, were yet less owing to themselves then any natural endowment. For tho we do not at all assist towards them, yet do we neither obstruct, but in the operations of Grace 'tis otherwise: we have there a principle of opposition, and God never makes us his own till he subdue that: and tho he do it not by an irresistable force, but by such sweet and gentle insinuations, that we are sometimes captivated ere we are aware: yet that do's not impeach his right of conquest, but only shews him the more gracious conqueror. 'Tis true in respect of the event we have great cause of exultance and joy, Gods service being the most perfect freedom: yet in regard of the efficiency, *Boasting of piety is a peculiar extravagance.*

we have as littlematter of Boaſt, as the ſurprized City has in the triumphs of its victor.

It either finds or makes the piety not real. 8. But ſecondly either this vaunted Piety is not reall, and then 'tis good for nothing, or elſe by being vaunted becomes ſo. If it be not reall, 'tis then the ſuperadding Hypocriſy to the former ſacriledg, and attemt at once to rob God and cheat men, and in the event uſually renders them hateful to both, to God (who cannot be mocked) it do's ſo at the inſtant, and ſeldom miſſes to do ſo at laſt to men. An Hypocrite has a long part to act, and if his memory fail him but in any one ſcene, his play is ſpoiled: ſo that his hazards are ſo great, that 'tis as little prudent, as 'tis honeſt to ſet up the trade, eſpecially in an age when Piety it ſelf is at ſo low a price, that its counterfeit cannot paſs much. But if the piety be indeed true, the Boaſting it blaſts it, makes it utterly inſignificant. This we are told by *Chriſt* himſelf, who aſſures us, that even the moſt Chriſtian actions of praier, almes, and faſting, muſt expect no other reward (when boaſted) then the ſought-for applauſe of men. *Matt.* 6. When a man ſhall make his own tongue the trumpet of his Alms, or the echo of his Praiers, he carves, or rather ſnatches his own reward, and muſt not look God ſhould heap more upon him: the recompence of his pride he may indeed look for from him, but that of his vertue he has foreſtall'd. In ſhort piety is like thoſe Lamps of old, which maintain'd their light ſome Ages under ground, but as ſoon as they took air expir'd. And ſurely there cannot be a more deplorable folly, then thus to loſe a rich Jewel, only for the pitiful pleſures of ſhewing it: its the humor of Children and Idiots, who muſt be handling their birds till the fly away, and it ranks us with them in point of diſcretion, tho not of innocence.

Boaſting is a ſelf undermining vice. 9. From the view of theſe particulars we may in the groſs conclude that this oſtentation is a moſt fooliſh ſin, ſuch as never brought in advantage to any man. There is no vice ſo undermines it ſelf as this do's: 'tis glory it ſeeks, and inſtead of gaining of that, it loſes common ordinary eſtimation. Every body that ſees a bladder puft up, knows 'tis but wind that ſo ſwells it: and there is no ſurer argument of a light frothy brain, then this bubling at the mouth. Indeed there is nothing renders any man ſo contemtible, ſo utterly uſeleſs to the world: it excludes him almoſt from all commerce, makes him uncapable of receiving or doing a benefit. No man will do him a good turn, becauſe he foreſees he will arrogate it to himſelf, as the effect of his merit: and none (that are not in ſome great exigence) will receive one from him, as knowing it ſhall not only be proclamed, but magnified much above the true worth. There ſeems to be but one purpoſe for which he ſerves, and that is to be ſport for his company: and that he ſeldom fails to be, for in theſe gameſome daies men will not loſe ſuch an opportunity of divertiſement, and therefore will purpoſely give him hints, which may put him upon his Rhodomontades. I do not ſpeak this by way of encouragement to them, but only to ſhew theſe vaporers, to what ſcorn they expoſe themſelves, and what advantage they give to any that have a mind to abuſe them: for they need not be at any pains for it, they do but ſwim with their ſtream; an approving nod or ſmile, ſerves to drive on the deſign, and make them diſplay themſelves more diſadvantagiouſly, more ridiculouſly, then the moſt Satyrical Character could poſſibly do.

The Boaſter is a certain prey to flatterer. 10. But beſides theſe ſportive projects, ſuch a man laies himſelf open to more dangerous circumventions. He that ſhews himſelf ſo enamour'd of praiſe, that (*Narciſſus* like) dotes on his own reflections, is a fit prey for

for Flatterers, and such a Carcase will never want those Eagles: when his weak port is once discern'd (as it must soon be when himself publishes it) he shall quickly be surrounded with assailants. The last Section has shewed the misery of a man so beseiged, therefore I shall not enlarge on on it here, this mention being only intended to evince how apt this vain glorious humor is to betray men to it.

11. These are competent Specimens of the folly of this vice: but it has yet a farther aggravation, that it precludes all means of growing wiser: 'tis *Solomons* assertion, *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a Fool then of him.* Prov. 26. 12. And the reason is evident, for he discards the two grand instruments of instruction, Admonition and Observation. The former he thinks superseded by his own Perfections, and therefore when any such friendly office is attemted towards him, he imputes it either to Envy and a desire to eclipse his lustre by finding some spots, or else to Ignorance and incapacity of estimating his worth: the one he entertains with Indignation, the other with disdainful Pity. As for Observation, he so circumscribes it within himself, that it can never fetch in any thing from without. Reading of men has bin by some thought the most facile and expedite Method for acquiring Knowledg: and sure for some kinds of Knowledg it is, but then a man must not only read one Author, much less the worst one he can pick out for himself. 'Tis an old and true saying; He that is his own Pupil, shall have a Fool for his Tutor: and truly he that studies only himself, will be like to make but a sorry Progress. Yet this is the case of arrogant men, they lose all the benefit of Conversation, and when they should be enriching their Minds with forreign tresure, they are only counting over their own store. Instead of adverting to those sober discourses which they hear from others, they are perhaps watching to interrupt them by some pompous Story of themselves, or at least in the abundance of their self-sufficiency, think they can say much better things, Magisterially obtrude their own notions, and fall a teaching when 'tis fitter they should learn: and sure to be thus forward to lay out, and take no care to bring in, must needs end in a Bankrupt state. 'Tis true I confess the study of a mans-self is (rightly taken) the most usefull part of learning, but then it must be such a Study as brings him to know himself, which none do so little as these men, who in this are like those silly women the Apostle describes 2 Tim. 3. 7. *Who are ever learning, yet never attain.* And 'tis no wonder, for they begin at the wrong end, make no inquiry into their faults or defects, but fix their Contemplation only on their more splendid qualities, with which they are so dazled, that when you bring them to the darker parts of themselves, it fares with them as with those that come newly from gazing on the Sun, they can see nothing.

It precludes to himself all means of growing wiser.

12. And now having dissected this swelling vice, and seen what it is that feeds the tumor, the cure suggests it self. If the disease be founded in Pride, the abating that is the most natural and proper remedy: and truly one would think that men weighing of the foregoing considerations, might prove sufficient allaies to it. Yet because where humors are turgent, 'tis necessary not only to purge them, but also to strengthen the infested part, I shall adventure to give some few advices by way of Fortification and Antidote.

The cures of the disease is either by revulsion;

13. In the first place, that of the Apostle offers it self to my hand, *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* Phil. 2. 4. A counsil which in a distorted sense seems to be too much practiced.

Or by fortifying the affected part, by enlarging our thoughts.

We are apt to apply it to worldly advantages, and in that notion not to look on our own things with thankfulneſs, but on other mens with envy. We apply it alſo to errors and ſins, and look not on our own to correct and reform, but on others to deſpiſe and cenſure. Let us at laſt take it in the genuine ſenſe, and not look on our own excellences, but thoſe of others. We ſee in all things how deſuetude do's contract and narrow our faculties, ſo that we can apprehend only thoſe things wherein we are converſant. The droiling Peſant ſcarce thinks there is any world beyond his own Village, or the neighboring Markets, nor any gaity beyond that of a Wake or Morrice; and men who are accuſtom'd only to the admiration of themſelves, think there is nothing beſide them worthy of regard. Theſe unbred minds muſt be a little ſent abroad, made acquainted with thoſe excellences which God has beſtowed on other men, and then they will not think themſelves like *Gideons* fleece to have ſuckt up all the dew of heaven: nay perhaps, they may find they rather anſwer the other part of the miracle; and are drier then their neighbors. Let them therefore put themſelves in this courſe, obſerve diligently all the good that is viſible in other men: and when they find themſelves mounting into their altitudes, let them clog their wings with the remembrance of thoſe who have out-ſoar'd them, not in vain opinion, but in true worth. 'Tis nothing but the fancy of ſingularity that puffs us up. To breathe, to walk, to hear, to ſee, are excellent powers, yet no body is proud of them, becauſe they are common to the whole kind: and therefore if we would obſerve the great number of thoſe that equal, or exceed us, even in the more appropriate endowments, we ſhould not put ſo exceſſive a price upon our ſelves.

By making a fair and equal reflection upon our ſelves.

14. Secondly if we will needs be reflecting upon our ſelves, let us do it more ingenuouſly, more equally; let us take a true ſurvey, and obſerve as well the barren as the fertil part of the ſoil: and if this were don, many mens value would be much ſhort of what they are willing to ſuppoſe it. Did we but compare our crop of Weeds and Nettles, with that of our Corn, we muſt either think our ground is poor, or our ſelves very ill husbands. When therefore the recollection of either reall or fancied worth begins to make us aery, let us condenſe again by the remembrance of our ſins and folly, 'tis the only poſſible ſervice they can do us, and conſidering how dear they are to coſt us, we had not need loſe this one accidental advantage. In this ſenſe *Satan may caſt out Satan*, our vileſt guilts help to eject our pride, and did we well manage this one ſtratagem againſt him, 'twould give us more cauſe of triumph, then moſt of thoſe things for which we ſo ſpread our plumes: I do not ſay we ſhould contract new guilts to make us humble, God knows we need not, we have all of us enough of the old ſtock, if we would but thus employ them.

And by avoiding all ſelf-ſpeaking

15. In the laſt place I ſhould adviſe thoſe who are apt to talk big things of themſelves, to turn into ſome other road of diſcourſe: for if they are their own Theme, their tongues will as naturally turn into Eulogies, as a horſe do's into that Inn to which he is cuſtomed. All habits do require ſome little exceſs of the contrary to their cure: for we have not ſo juſt a ſcantling of our ſelves, as to know to a grain what will level the ſcales, and place us in the right Mediocrity. Let men therefore that have this infirmity, ſhun (as far as prudence and intereſt permits) all diſcourſe of themſelves, till they can ſever it from that unhappy appendage. They will not be at all the leſs acceptable company, it being generally thought none of the beſt parts of breeding, to talk much of ones ſelf: for tho it be

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don so as not to argue pride, yet it do's ignorance of more worthy subjects.

16. I should here conclude this Section, but that there is another sort of vaunting Talk, which was not well reducible to any of the former Heads, the Subject matter being vastly distant: for in those the Boasting was founded in some either real or supposed worth, but this in Baseness and villany. There are a Generation of men, who have removed all the Land-marks which their Fathers (nay even the Father of Spirits) have set, revers'd the common notions of Humanity, and call evil good, and good evil, and those things which a moderate impudence would blush to be surpris'd in, they not only proclame but boast of, blow the Trumpet as much before their their crimes, as other good deeds. Nay so much do they affect this inverted sort of Hypocrisy, that they own more wickedness then they act, assume to have made Practical the highest Speculations of villany, and like the Devils Knights errants, pretend to those Romantic atchievements, which the veriest Fiend Incarnate could never compass. These are such Prodigies, such Monsters of villany, that tho they are the objects of Grief and Wonder, they are not of Counsel. Men who thus rave, we may conclude their brains are turned, and one may as well read Lectures at Bedlam as treat with such. Yet we know that there sharp corrections recover crazed men to Sobriety; and then their Cure lies only in the hand of Civil Justice: if that would take them at their words, receive their Brags as Confessions, and punish them accordingly, it may be a little real smart would correct this mad Itch, and teach them not *to glory in their shame.* Phil. 3. 19.

The last step of boasting is to brag of baseness and villany.

In the mean time let others who are not yet arrived to this height, consider betimes, that all indulgent practice of sin is the direct Road to it, and according to the degrees of that indulgence, they make more or less hast. He that constantly and habitually indulges, rides upon the Spur, and will quickly overtake his Leaders: nay if it be but this one vice of vanity, it may finally bring him to their State. He that loves to brag, will scarce find exercise enough for that faculty in his vertues, and therefore may at last be temted to take in his vices also. But that which is more seriously considerable is, that Pride is so provoking to Almighty God, that it often causes him to withdraw his *Grace*, which is a Donative he has promised only *to the Humble.* Jam. 4. 6. And indeed when we turn that Grace into wantonness, as the Proud man do's who is pamper'd by it into high conceits of himself, 'tis not probable God will any longer prostitute his favors to such abuse. The Apostle observes it of the Gentiles, who had in contradiction of their natural light abandon'd themselves to vile Idolatries, that God *after gave them up to a reprobate mind and vile affections.* Rom. 1. 25, 26. But the Proud now stifle a much clearer light, and give up themselves to as base an Idolatry, the adoration of themselves: and therefore 'tis but equal to expect God should desert them, and (as some Nations have Deified their diseases) permit them to celebrate even their fowlest enormities. The application of all I shall sum up in the words of the Apostle, Rom. 11. 21. *Take heed also that he spare not thee.*

The consideration of this reprobate state, should affright from all steps towards it.

SECT. X.

Of Querulouſneſs.

The boaſter is moſt apt to be querulous.

1. TO this of Boaſting may not unfitly be ſubjoin'd another inordinacy of the Tongue, viz. murmuring and complaining. For tho theſe faults ſeem to differ as much in their complexions, as Sanguine do's from Melancholy, yet there is nothing more frequent then to ſee them united in the ſame Perſon. Nor is this conjunction of a latter date, but is as old as St. *Judes* daies, who obſerves that the *murmurers* and *complainers* are the very ſame with thoſe who ſpeak *great ſwelling words*, Jude 16.

Pride obliges to both.

2. Nor are we to wonder to find them thus conjoin'd, if we conſider what an original cognation and kindred they have, they being (however they ſeem divided) ſtreams iſſuing from the ſame fountain. For the very ſame pride which promts a man to vaunt and overvalue what he is, do's as forcibly incline him to contemn and diſvalue what he has; whilſt meſuring his enjoyments by that vaſt Idea he has form'd of himſelf, 'tis impoſſible but he muſt think them below him.

This ingrateful humor is the complexion of mankind.

3. This indeed is the true original of thoſe perpetual complainings we hear from all ſorts and conditions of men. For let us paſs thro all Degrees, all Ages, we ſhall rarely find a ſingle Perſon, much leſs any number of men exemt from this Querulous, this ſullen humor: as if that breath of life wherewith God originally inſpired us, had bin given us not to magnify his Bounty, but to accuſe his Illiberality, and like the diſmaller ſorts of inſtruments, could be tuned to no other Streins but thoſe of Mourning and Lamentation. Every man contributes his note to this doleful Harmony, and after all that God has don to oblige and delight mankind, ſcarce any man is ſatisfied enough, I will not ſay to be thankful, but to be patient. For alas what Tragical complaints do men make of their infelicity, when perhaps their proſperity is as much the envious outcry of others? Every little defeat of a deſign, of an appetite, every little diſregard from thoſe above them, or leſs ſolemn obſervance from thoſe below them, makes their *Heart hot within them*, Pſal. 39. 3. and the tongue (that combuſtible part) quickly takes fire and *breaks out* into extravagant exclamations. It is indeed ſtrange to ſee how weighty every the trivialleſt thing is when a paſſion is caſt into the ſcale with it, how every the ſlighteſt inconvenience or petty want preponderates hundreds of great ſubſtantial bleſſings: when indeed were it in an inſtance never ſo conſiderable, it could be no juſt Counterpoiſe. Yet ſo cloſely is this corruption interwoven with our conſtitution, that it has ſometimes prevail'd even upon good men. *Jacob* tho he had twelve ſons, yet upon the ſuppoſed death of one deſpis'd the comforts of all the reſt, and with an obſtinate ſorrow reſolves to *go mourning to his grave*. Gen. 35. 37. David after that ſignal victory which had preſerv'd his life, reinſtated him in his Throne, and reſtor'd him to the Ark and Sanctuary, yet ſuffer'd the loſs of his rebellious ſon, who was the Author of his danger, to overwhelm the ſenſe of his deliverance, and inſtead of Hymns and praiſes, breaks out into ejulations and effeminate wailings, 2 *Sam.* 18. 33.

4. But

4. But God knows the moſt of our complaints cannot pretend to ſuch conſiderable motives: they are not the bowels of a Father, the impreſſes of Nature that excite our repinings, but the impulſes of our luſts and inordinate appetites. Our diſcontents are uſually ſuch as *Ahab*'s for his neighbors vineyard, *Haman*'s for *Mordecai*'s obeiſance, *Achitophel*'s for having his counſil rejected. Every diſappointment of our avarice, ambition and pride, fills our hearts with bitterneſs and our mouths with clamor. For if we ſhould examine the numerous complaints which ſound in every corner, it would doubtleſs be found that the greateſt part of them have ſome ſuch original: and that, whether the pretended grievances be public or private. For the firſt: many a man is a ſtate malecontent, meerly becauſe he ſees another advanced to that honor or wealth which he thinks he has better deſerv'd. He is alwaies inveighing againſt ſuch unequal diſtributions, where the beſt ſervices (ſuch you may be ſure his own are) are the worſt rewarded: nor do's he ever ceaſe to predict public ruines, till his private are repaired. But as ſoon as that is don, his Augury grows more mild: and as if the ſtate and he were like *Hippocrates*'s twins, his recruits give new vigor to that, and till his next ſuit is denied, every thing is well adminiſtred. So full alas men are of themſelves, that 'tis hard to find any the moſt ſplendid pretences which have not ſomething of that at the bottom: and would every man ranſack his own heart, and reſolve not to caſt a ſtone till he had firſt clear'd it of all ſiniſter reſpects, perhaps the number of our complainers would be much abated. *Grounded generally upon the ſlighteſt and worſt motives.*

5. Nor is it otherwiſe in private diſcontents. Men are apt to think themſelves ill uſed by any man who will not ſerve their intereſt or their humor, nay ſometimes their vices; and are prone in all companies to arraign ſuch an unpliant Perſon, as if he were an enemy to mankind, becauſe he is not a ſlave to their will. Nay many have quarrel'd even with their deareſt friends, becauſe they would not aſſiſt them to their own ruine, or have ſtriven to divert them from it: ſo forcible are our pretenſions to mutiny, that we equally take occaſions from benefits or injuries. *Level'd ſometimes againſt our neighbor.*

6. But the higheſt and moſt unhappy inſtance of all is in our behavior towards God, whoſe allotments we diſpute with the ſame, or rather greater boldneſs then we do thoſe of men. What elſe mean thoſe impatient murmurs at thoſe things which are the immediate iſſues of his Providence? Such are our native blemiſhes, diſeaſes, death of friends, and the like. Nay what indeed are our diſpleaſures even at thoſe things which we pretend to faſten upon Second Cauſes? For thoſe being all under the ſubordination of the firſt, cannot move but by its permiſſion. This holy *Job* well diſcern'd, and therefore do's not indite the *Caldeans* or *Sabeans* for his plunder, but knowing they were but inſtruments, he ſubmiſly acknowledges, that there was a higher agent in his loſs, *The Lord hath taken away*, Job 1. 21. When therefore we ravingly execrate the rapine of one man, the deceit of another for our impoveriſhment, when we angrily charge our defamation on the malice of our maligners, our diſappointments on the treachery or negligence of our friends, we do interpretatively conclude either that there is no over-ruling providence which could have reſtrained thoſe events, or elſe (which is equally horrid) we accuſe it as not having don well in permitting them. So that againſt whoſoever we direct our clamors, their laſt rebound is againſt Heaven; this Querulous humor carrying alwaies an implicite repugnance *And often againſt God.*

pugnance to Gods diſpoſals: but where it is indulged to, it uſually is its own expoſitor, and explicitely avows it, charges God fooliſhly, and by impious murmurs blaſphemes that power which it cannot reſiſt. Indeed the progreſs is very natural for our impatiences at men to ſwell into mutinies againſt God: for when the mind is once imbitter'd, it diſtinguiſhes not of objects, but indifferently lets fly its venom. *He that frets himſelf*, the prophet tells us, *will curſe his King*, nay *his God*, Iſa. 8. 21. and he that quarrels at Gods diſtributions, is in the direct road to defy his Being.

The firſt naturally leads to the latter, and embitters all our enjoyments.

7. By this we may eſtimate the danger of our diſcontents, which tho at firſt they are introduced by the inordinate love of our ſelves, yet are very apt to terminate in hatred and Blaſphemies againſt God. He therefore that would ſecure himſelf from the higheſt degree, muſt watch againſt the loweſt; as he that would prevent a total Inundation, muſt avert the ſmalleſt breach in his Banks. Not but that even the firſt beginnings are in themſelves well worth our guarding: for abſtracting from all the danger of this enormous increaſe, theſe murmurings (like a mortiferous Herb) are poiſonous even in their firſt Spring, before they arrive to their full maturity. To be alwaies moralizing the Fable of *Prometheus* upon one's ſelf, playing the Vulture upon ones own intrails, is no deſirable thing, tho we were accountable to none but our ſelves for it: to dip our tongues in gall, to have nothing in our mouths but the extract, the exhalation of our inward bitterneſs, is ſure no great Senſuality. So that did we conſult only our own eaſe, we might from that ſingle Topic draw arguments enough againſt our mutinies.

Is degenerous and unmanly.

8. But beſides our duty and eaſe, our reputations make their plea alſo. Fortitude is one of the nobleſt of moral vertues, and has the luck to appear conſiderable even to thoſe who deſpiſe all the reſt. Now one of the moſt proper and eminent acts of that is, the bearing adverſe events with evenneſs and temper. This paſſive valor is as much the mark of a great mind as the active, nay perhaps more, the latter being often owing to the Animal, this to the Rational part of man. And ſure we muſt ſtrangely have corrupted the principles of *Morality* as well as *Religion*, if every turbulent unruly Spirit, that fills the world with blood and rapine, ſhall have his ferity cal'd gallantry; yet that ſober courage, that maintains it ſelf againſt all the ſhocks of Fortune, that keeps its Poſt in ſpight of the rudeſt encounters; ſhall not be allowed at leaſt as good a name. And then on the contrary we may conclude, that to ſink under every croſs accident, to be ſtill whining and complaining, crying out upon every touch is a note of a mean degenerous ſoul, below the dignity of our reaſonable nature. For certainly God never gave us reaſon for ſo unkind a purpoſe, as only to quicken and inhance the reſentment of our ſufferings, but rather to controle thoſe diſorders, which the more tumultuous part of us, our ſenſes, are apt to raiſe in us: and we are ſo far men and no farther, as we uſe it to that end. Therefore if the dictates of religion cannot reſtrain our murmurs, if we are not Chriſtians enough to ſubmit to the divine precepts of meekneſs and acquieſcence: yet let us at leaſt keep within thoſe bounds which ingenuous nature has ſet us, and not by our unmanly impatiencies enter common with Brutes and Animals.

Is moſt uneaſy to others and troubleſom in converſation.

9. Nay I may farther add, if neither for Gods nor our own ſakes, yet for others, for humane ſocietie's ſake, this querulous inclination ſhould be ſuppreſt; there being nothing that renders a man more unpleaſant,

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more uneaſy company. For (beſides that 'tis very apt to vent it ſelf upon thoſe with whom he converſes, rendring him capricious & exceptious; and 'tis a harſh, a grating ſound to hear a man alwaies in the complaining Key) no man would willingly dwell within the noiſe of ſhreeks and groans; and the exclamations of the diſcontented differ from thoſe only by being more articulate. It is a very unwelcome importunity, to entertain a mans company with remonſtrances of his own infelicities and miſadventures, and he that will relate all his grievances to others, will quickly make himſelf one to them. For tho he that is full of the inward ſenſe of them, thinks it rather an eaſe then oppreſſion to ſpeak them out, yet the caſe is far otherwiſe with his Auditors: they are perhaps as much taken up with themſelves, as he is, and as little at leiſure to conſider his concerns, as he theirs. Alas we are not now in thoſe primitive daies, when there was as it were one common ſenſe among Chriſtians, when *if one member ſuffer'd, all the members ſuffer'd with it*, 1 Cor. 12. That Charity which gave that ſympathetic motion to the whole, is now it ſelf benumm'd, flows rarely beyond the narrow compaſs of our perſonal intereſt; and therefore we cannot expect that men ſhould be very patient of our complaints who are not concern'd in the cauſes of them. The Prieſts anſwer to *Judas* do's ſpeak the ſenſe of moſt men in the caſe, *What is that to us? See thou to that.* Matt. 27. 4. I do not deny but that the diſcharging ones griefs into the boſome of a true friend, is both innocent and prudent: any indeed he that has ſuch a treſure, is unkind to himſelf if he uſe it not. But that which I would diſſwade, is the promiſcuous uſe of this liberty in common Converſation, the ſatisfying our Spleen, when we cannot eaſe our hearts by it, the loud declamings at our miſery, which is ſeldom ſever'd from as ſevere reflections on thoſe whom we ſuppoſe the cauſes of it; by which nothing can be acquired but the opinion of our Impatience, or perhaps ſome new grievance from ſome, who think themſelves concern'd to vindicate thoſe whom we aſperſe. In a word 'tis as indecent as it is unacceptable, and we may obſerve all men are willing to ſlink out of ſuch company, the Sober for the hazards, the Jovial for the unpleaſantneſs. So that the murmurer ſeems to be turn'd off to the company of thoſe doleful Creatures which the Prophet mentions, which were *to inhabit the ruins of Babylon.* If. 13. 21. For he is ill Converſation to all men, tho the worſt of all to himſelf.

10. And now upon the force of all theſe conſiderations, I may reaſonably impreſs the Wiſe mans Counſil, *Therefore beware of murmuring*, Wiſd. 1. 11. And indeed it is not the precept of the Wiſeman alone, but of all who have made any juſt pretence to that title. For when we conſider thoſe excellent lectures of contentation and acquieſcence, wherewith the writings of Philoſophers abound, 'tis hard to ſay whether they ſpeak more of inſtruction or reproch to us. When their confuſed notions of a Deity had given them ſuch impreſſions of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, that they would not pretend to make any elections for themſelves, how do's it ſhame our more explicite knowledg, who dare not depend on him in the ſmalleſt inſtance? who will not take his diſpoſals for good, unleſs our ſenſes become his ſureties? which amounts but to that degree of credit, which the moſt faithleſs man may expect from us, the truſting him as far as we ſee him. This is ſuch a contumely to him, as the Ethnic world durſt not offer him, & is the peculiar inſolence of us degenerated Chriſtians, who ſure cannot be thought in earneſt when we talk of ſinging *Hallelujahs* in the next world to him, whilſt we entertain him here only with the ſullen

The murmurer ſeems to fit himſelf for the region of weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

noiſe of murmurs and repinings. For we are not to think that Heaven will Metamorphoſe us on a ſudden, and turn our exclamations and wild clamors into Lauds and Magnificats. It do's indeed perfect and crown thoſe graces which were here inchoate and begun, but no mans converſion ever ſucceeded his being there: for Chriſt has expreſly told us, *That except we be converted, we ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*; if we go hence in our froward diſcontents, they will aſſociate us with thoſe, with whom is *Weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.*

SECT. XI.

Of Poſitiveneſs.

Poſitiveneſs uſurps a tyranny upon the mind of others; which in the greateſt ſlavery is free.

1. ANother very unhandſom circumſtance in diſcourſe is the being over confident and peremtory, a thing which do's very much unfit men for converſation, it being lookt on as the common birth-right of mankind, that every man is to opine according to the dictates of his own underſtanding, not anothers. Now this Peremtorineſs is of too ſorts, the one a Magiſterialneſs in matters of opinion and ſpeculation, the other a Poſitiveneſs in relating matters of fact: in the one we impoſe upon mens underſtandings, in the other on their faith.

The firſt branch of it is a Magiſterial impoting of ſpeculative opinions.

2. For the firſt, he muſt be much a ſtranger in the world who has not met with it: there being a generation of men, who as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Are wiſe in their own eies, and prudent in their own ſight*, Iſa. 5. 21. Nay not only ſo, but who make themſelves the ſtandards of wiſdom, to which all are bound to conform, and whoever weighs not in their balance, be his reaſons never ſo weighty, they write *Tekel* upon them. This is one of the moſt oppreſſive Monopolies imaginable: all others can concern only ſomthing without us, but this faſtens upon our nature, yea and the better part of it too, our reaſon; and if it meet with thoſe who have any conſiderable ſhare of that within them, they will often be temted to rally it, and not too tamely reſign this native liberty. Reaſon ſubmits only to reaſon, and he that aſſaults it with bare Autority (that which is Divine alwaies excepted) may as well cut flame with his ſword, or harden wax in the ſun.

The being uncontrould in company is no evidence of having convinct it.

3. 'Tis true indeed theſe great Dictators do ſometimes run down the company, and carry their Hypotheſis without conteſt: but of this there may be divers reaſons beſides the weight of their arguments. Some unſpeculative men may not have the skill to examine their aſſertions, and therefore an aſſent is their ſafeſt courſe; others may be lazy and not think it worth their pains; a third ſort may be modeſt and awed by a ſevere brow and an imperious nod: and perhaps the wiſer may providently foreſee the impoſſibility of convincing one who thinks himſelf unerrable. Upon theſe or other like grounds 'tis very poſſible all may be ſilenced when never a one is convinced: ſo that theſe great Maſters may often make very falſe eſtimates of their conqueſts, and *ſacrifice to their own nets*, Hab. 1. 16. when they have taken nothing.

4. Nay indeed this inſolent way of propoſing is ſo far from propagating their notions, that it gives prejudice againſt them. They are the gentle inſinuations which pierce (as oil is the moſt penetrating of all liquors;) but in theſe Magiſterial documents men think themſelves attacqu'd, and

and ſtand upon their guard, and reckon they muſt part with Honor together with their Opinion, if they ſuffer themſelves to be Hector'd out of it. Beſides this impoſing humor is ſo unamiable, that it gives an averſion to the Perſon; and we know how forcible perſonal prejudices are (tho 'tis true they ſhould not be) towards the biaſſing of Opinions. Nay indeed men of this temper do cut themſelves off from the opportunies of Proſelyting others, by averting them from their company. Freedom is the endearing thing in Society, and where that is control'd, men are not very fond of aſſociating themſelves. 'Tis natural to us to be uneaſy in the preſence of thoſe who aſſume an Authority over us. Children care not for the company of their Parents or Tutors, and men will care leſs for theirs, who would make them Children by uſurping a Tutelage.

Nothing is more ridiculo- then a concluding face put to an unconcluding argument.

5. All theſe inconveniences are evidently conſequent to this Dogmatizing, ſuppoſing men be never ſo much in the right: but if they happen to be in the wrong, what a ridiculous pageantry is it, to ſee ſuch a Philoſophical gravity ſet to man-out a Soleciſm? A concluding Face put upon no concluding arguments, is the moſt contemtible ſort of folly in the world. They do by this ſound a Trumpet to their own defeat: and whereas a modeſt miſtake might ſlip by undiſcern'd, theſe Rhodomontade errors force themſelves upon mens obſervation, and make it as impoſſible for men not to ſee, as it is not to deſpiſe them when they do. For indeed Pride is as ill linkt with Error, as we uſually ſay it is with Beggary, and in this as well as that converts pity into contemt.

Since all men are fallible, they ought to be wary & modeſt.

6. And then it would be conſidered, what ſecurity any man that will be impoſing has, that this will not be his caſe. Human nature is very fallible, and as it is poſſible a man may err in a great many things, ſo 'tis certain every man do's in ſomething or other. Now who knows at the inſtant he is ſo poſitive, but this may be his erring turn. Alas how frequently are we miſtaken even in common ordinary things: for as the wiſe man ſpeaks, *hardly do we judge aright even in things that are before us*, Wiſd. 9. 16. our very ſenſes do ſometimes delude us. How then may we wander in things of abſtruſe ſpeculation? The conſideration of this hath with ſome ſo prevail'd, that it has produc'd a Sect of ſcepticiſm: and tho I preſs it not for that purpoſe, yet ſure it may reaſonably be urged to introduce ſome modeſty and calmneſs in our aſſertions. For when we have no other certainty of our being in the right, but our own perſwaſions that we are ſo, this may often be but making one error the gage for another. For God knows confidence is ſo far from a certain mark of truth, that 'tis often the ſeducer into falſhood, none being ſo apt to loſe their way as thoſe who, out of an ungrounded preſumtion of knowing it, deſpiſe all direction from others.

Peremtorineſs befits, no form of underſtanding.

7. Let all this be weighed, and the reſult will be, that this peremtorineſs is a thing that can befit no form of underſtanding. It renders Wiſe men diſobliging and troubleſome, and fools ridiculous and contemtible. It caſts a prejudice upon the moſt ſolid reaſoning, and it renders the lighter more notoriouſly deſpicable. 'Tis pity good parts ſhould be leaven'd by it, made a ſnare to the owners and uſeleſs to others. And 'tis pity too that weak parts ſhould by it be condemn'd to be alwaies ſo, by deſpiſing thoſe Aids which ſhould improve them. Since therefore 'tis ſo ill calculated for every Meridian, would God all Climes might be purged from it.

Sometimes it riſes from pride.

8. And as there are weighty objections againſt it in reſpect of its effects, ſo there are no inconſiderable prejudices in relation to its cauſes, of which we may reckon Pride to be the moſt certain and univerſal: for

whatever elſe caſually occurs to it, this is the fundamental conſtitutive principle; nothing but a great overweening of a mans own underſtanding being able to inſtate him in that Imaginary empire over other mens. For here ſure we may ask the Apoſtles queſtion, *Who made thee to differ from another?* When God has made Rationality the common portion of mankind, how came it to be thy incloſure? or what Signature has he ſet upon thine, what mark of excellency, that thine ſhould be paramount? Doubtleſs if thou fancieſt thou haſt that part of *Jacobs* bleſſing, *To be Lord of thy brethren, and that all thy mothers ſons ſhould bow down to thee*, Gen. 27. 29. thou haſt got it more ſurreptitiouſly then he did, and with leſs effect: for tho *Iſaac* could not retract his miſtaken benediction, God will never atteſt that fantaſtic, thou haſt pronounced to thy ſelf, with his real effective one.

Sometimes from ignorance.

9. But there happens many times to be another ingredient beſides Pride, and that is Ignorance: for thoſe qualities however they may ſeem at war, do often very cloſely combine. He who has narrow notions, that knows but a few things, and has no glimpſe of any beyond him, thinks there are no ſuch: and therefore as if he had (like *Alexander*) no want but that of worlds to conquer, he thinks himſelf the abſolute monarch of all knowledg. And this is of all others the moſt unhappy compoſition: for ignorance being of it ſelf like ſtiff clay, an infertile ſoile, when pride comes to ſcorch and harden it, it grows perfectly impenetrable: and accordingly we ſee none are ſo inconvincible as your half-witted people; who know juſt enough to excite their pride, but not ſo much as to cure their ignorance.

A ſecond kind of poſitiveneſs is in relating matters of fact.

10. There remains yet a ſecond kind of Peremtorineſs which I am to ſpeak to, and that is of thoſe who can make no relation without an atteſtation of its certainty: a ſort of hoſpitable people, who entertain all the idle vagrant reports, and ſend them out with paſſports and teſtimonials; who when they have once adopted a ſtory, will have it paſs for legitimate how ſpurious ſoever it originally was. Theſe ſomewhat reſemble thoſe Hoſpitals in *Italy*, where all baſtards are ſure of reception, and ſuch a proviſion as may enable them to ſubſiſt in the world: and were it not for ſuch men, many a Fatherleſs lie would be ſtifled in its birth. It is indeed ſtrange to ſee, how ſuddenly looſe rumors knit into formal ſtories, and from thence grow to certainties; but 'tis ſtranger to ſee that men can be of ſuch profligated impudence, as knowingly to give them that advance. And yet 'tis no rarity to meet with ſuch men who will pawn their honors, their ſouls, for that unworthy purpoſe: nay and that too with as much impertinence as baſeneſs, when no intereſt of their own, or perhaps any man elſe is to be ſerved by it.

Its firſt element ſeems to be idleneſs, and the vanity of ſaying ſomewhat extraordinary in company.

10. This is ſo prodigious a thing, as ſeems to excite ones Curioſity to inquire the cauſe of ſo wonderful an Effect. And here as in other unnatural productions, there are ſeveral concurrents. If we trace it from its original, its firſt Element ſeems to be idleneſs: this diverting a man from ſerious uſeful entertainments, forces him upon (the uſual refuge of vacant Perſons) the inquiring after News, which when he has got, the venting of it is his next buſineſs. If he be of a credulous Nature, and believe it himſelf, he do's the more innocently impoſe it on others: yet then to ſecure himſelf from the imputation of Levity and too eaſy Faith, he is often temted to lend ſome probable circumſtance. Nay if he be of a proud humor, and have that miſerable vanity of loving to ſpeak big, and to be thought a man of greater correſpondence and intelligence then his Neighbours, he will not bate an Ace of abſolute certainty, but however

doubt-

doubtful or improbable the thing is, coming from him it muſt go for an indiſputable truth. This ſeems to be the deſcent of this unhappy folly, which yet is often nurſt up by a mean or imprudent Education. A man that hath converſt only with that lower ſort of company, who durſt not diſpute his veracity, thinks the ſame falſe Coin will paſs over the world, which went current amongſt his Father's Servants or Tenants: and therefore we may obſerve that this is more uſuall in young men, who have come raw into company with good fortunes and ill breeding. But it is too true alſo that too many never loſe the habit, but are as moroſely poſitive in their Age, as they were childiſhly ſo in their Youth. Indeed 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be otherwiſe, unleſs they have the wit to diſentangle themſelves firſt from the love of Flattery, and after from the company of Flatterers: for (as I have before obſerv'd) no vice will ever wither under their ſhade. I think I ſhall do the Reader no ill office to let in a little light upon them, and ſhew him ſome of thoſe many miſchiefs that attend this unworthy practice.

12. Firſt it engages a man to Oaths, and for ought he knows to Perjuries. When he has lancht out boldly into an incredible relation, he thinks he has put his Credit upon the forlorn hope, and muſt take care to relieve it: and there is no ſuccor ſo conſtantly ready at hand as that of Oaths and imprecations, and therefore whole vollies of them are diſcharged upon the doubtful. Thus do we make God a witneſs, and our Souls parties in the cauſe of every trifling rumor, as if we had model'd our Divinity by the Scheme of that Jeſuitical Caſuiſt, who legitimates the Killing of a man for an Apple. *This folly engages to perjuries.*

13. A ſecond miſchief is, that it betraies a man to quarrels. He that is peremtory in his own Story, may meet with another that is as peremtory in the contradiction of it, and then the two Sr. *Poſitives* muſt have a skirmiſh indeed. He that has atteſted the truth of a falſe, or the certainty of a doubtful thing, has brought himſelf into the ſame ſtrait with *Balaams* Aſs, he muſt either fall down flat or run upon a ſword, Num. 22. 27. For if his Hearers do but expreſs a diffidence, either he muſt ſink to a down-right Confeſſion that he was a Liar, or elſe he muſt huff and bluſter till perhaps he raiſe a counter-ſtorm, and as he fool'd himſelf out of his truth, ſo be beaten out of the pretence to it. Indeed there is ſcarce any quality that do's ſo temt and invite affronts as this do's: for he that can deſcend to ſuch a meanneſs, may reaſonably enough be preſumed to have little (as of true worth, ſo) even of that which the world calls Gallantry, and ſo every puny ſword-man will think him a good tame Quarry to venter and fleſh himſelf upon. *And alſo to quarrels.*

14. In the third place it expoſes him to all the contemt and ſcorn which either good or ill men can fling upon him: the good abominate the ſin, the ill triumph over the folly of it. The truth is there can be nothing more wretchedly mean. To be a Knight of the Poſt to every fabulous relation, is ſuch a ſordid thing, that there can ſcarce any name of reproch be too vile for it. And certainly he that can pawn his faith upon ſuch miſerable terms, will by thoſe frequent morgages quickly be ſnapt upon a forfeiture; or however will have his credit ſo impair'd by it, that no man will think his word a competent gage for the ſlighteſt concern. *Likewiſe it expoſes to contemt.*

15. And this may paſs for a fourth conſideration, That this Poſitiveneſs is ſo far from gaining credit to his preſent affirmation, that it deſtroys it for the future: for he that ſees a man make no difference in the confidence of his aſſerting realities and fictions, can never take his meſures *The attemt to gain credit to a preſent affirmation, deſtroies it for the future.*

by any thing he avers, but according to the common Proverb, will be in danger of disbelieving him even when he speaks truth. And of this no man can want conviction, who will but consult his own observation. For what an allay do we find it to the credit of the most probable event, that it is reported by one who uses to stretch? Thus unhappily do such men defeat their own designs: for while they aver stoutly that they may be believed, that very thing makes them doubted, the world being not now to learn how frequently Confidence is made a supplement for truth. Nor let any man who uses this, flatter himself that he alone do's (like *Jobs* messenger) escape the common fate: for tho perhaps he meet with some who in civility or pity will not dispute the probability of his narrations, or with others who for raillery will not discourage the humor with which they mean (in his absence) to divert themselves, yet he may rest assur'd he is discern'd by all and derided for it.

Wise men avoid the reporting improbable truths.

16. It therefore concerns men who either regard their truth, or their reputation, not to indulge to this humor, which is the most silly way of shipwracking both. For he that will lay those to stake upon every flying story, may as well wager his estate which way the wind will sit next morning, there being nothing less to be confided in, then the breath of fame, or the whispers of private tale-bearers. Wise men are afraid to report improbable truths: what a fool hardiness is it then to attest improbable falsities, as it often is the luck of these Positive men to do?

An unconcern'd relation, is most likely to gain belief.

17. Certainly there is nothing which they design by this, which may not be obtain'd more effectually by a modest and unconcern'd relation. He that barely relates what he has heard, and leaves the hearer to judg of the probability, do's as much (I am sure more civilly) entertain the company, as he that throws down his gauntlet in attestation. He as much satisfies the itch of telling news; he as much perswades his hearers: nay very much more (for these over earnest asseverations serve but to give men suspicion that the Speaker is conscious of his own falsness:) and all this while he has his retreat secure, and stands not responsible for the truth of his relation. Nay indeed tho men speak never so known and certain truths, 'tis most advisable not to press them too importunately. For boldness, like the Bravoes and Banditi, is seldom emploied but upon desperate services, and is so known a Pander for lying, that truth is but defam'd by its attendance.

Modesty is a most powerful scheme of oratory.

18. To conclude, modesty is so amiable, so insinuating a thing, that all the rules of Oratory cannot help men to a more agreeable ornament of discourse. And if they will try it in both the foregoing instances, they will undoubtedly find the effects of it: a modest proposal will soonest captivate mens reasons, and a modest relation their belief.

SECT. XII.

Of Obscene Talk.

Obscenity seems to verify the fiction of brute beasts talking together.

1. THere is another vice of the Tongue which I cannot but mention, tho I knew not in which of the former Classes to place it: not that it comes under none, but that 'tis so common to all, that 'tis not easy to resolve to which peculiarly to assign it, I mean obscene & immodest Talk, which is offensive to the purity of God, damagable and infectious to the inno-

innocence of our Neighbors, and most pernicious to our selves: and yet is now grown a thing so common, that one would think we were fallen into an Age of Metamorphosis, and that the Brutes did (not only Poetically and in fiction) but really speak. For the talk of many is so bestial, that it seems to be but the conceptions of the more libidinous Animals clothed in humane Language.

This renouncing of reason and ingenuity, passes for wit.

2. And yet even this must pass for Ingenuity, and this vile descent below Humanity, must be counted among the highest strains of Wit. A wretched debasement of that sprightful Faculty, thus to be made the interpreter to a Goat or Boar: for doubtless had those Creatures but the organs of Speech, their Fancies lie enough that way to make them as good company, as those who more studiously apply themselves to this sort of entertainment.

Its pestilent corruptio can not be discussed without stench and danger of contagion

3. The crime is comprehensive enough to afford abundance of matter for the most Satyrical zeal, but I consider the dissecting of putrid Bodies may cast such pestilential fumes, as all the benefits of the scrutiny will not recompense. I shall therefore in respect to the Reader dismiss this noisome Subject, and thereby give an example with what abhorrence he should alwaies reject such kind of discourse, remembring the advice of St. *Paul, That all uncleanness should not be once named among those who would walk as becometh Saints*, Eph. 5. 3.

The Close.

The government of the tongue has now an additional difficulty from the licence of the age.

1. I Have now touched upon those enormities of Speech which I principally design'd to observe, wherein I have bin far from making a full and exact Catalogue: therefore I would have no man take this little Tract for a just Criterion, by which to try himself in reference to his words. Yet God grant that all that read it, may be able to approve themselves even by this imperfect essay: and he that do's so, makes fair approches towards being *that perfect man* St. *James* speaks of, Jam. 3. 1. these being such faults of the Tongue as are the harder to avoid, because they are every day exemplified to us in common practice, (nay some of them recommended as reputable and ingenious.) And it is a strange insinuative power which example and custom have upon us. We see it in every trivial secular instance, in our very habit: those dresses which we laugh'd at in our forefathers wardrobes or pictures, when by the circulation of time and vanity they are brought about, we think very becoming. 'Tis the same in our diet: our very palates conform to the fashion, and every thing grows amiable to our fancies, according as 'tis more or less received in the world. And upon this account all sobriety and strict vertue lies now under a heavy prejudice, and no part of it more, then this of the Tongue, which custom has now enfranchized from all the bonds Moralists or Divines had laid upon it.

The greatness of difficulty ought to awake diligence.

2. But the greater the difficulties are, the more it ought to awake our diligence: if we lie loose and carelesly, 'tis odds we shall be carried away with the stream. We had need therefore fix our selves, and by a sober recollection of the ends for which our Speech was given us, and the account we must one day give of it, impress upon our selves the baseness and the danger of misemploying it. Yet a negative innocence will not serve our turns, 'twill but put us in the condition of him, *who wrapt up the talent he was commanded to employ*, Matth. 25. 25. Nay indeed twill

'twill be impoſſible to preſerve even that if we aſpire no farther. The Tongue is a buſie active Part, will ſcarce be kept from motion: and therefore if that activity be not determin'd to good objects, 'twill be practiſing upon bad. And indeed I believe a great part of its licentiouſneſs is owing to this very thing. There are ſo few Themes of diſcourſe in uſe, that many are driven to the ill for want of better. Learning is thought Pedantic, Agriculture Peaſant-like, and Religion the moſt inſufferable of all: ſo by excluding all uſeful Subjects of converſe, we come together as St. *Paul* (in another caſe) ſaies, *Not for the better, but for the worſe.* 1 Cor. 11. 17. And if the Philoſopher thought he had loſt that day wherein he had not learnt ſomething worthy his notice, how many daies do we worſe then loſe, by having them not only emty of ſolid uſeful acquiſitions, but full of noxious and pernicious ones? And indeed if they be the one, they will not miſs to be the other alſo: for the mind is like the ſtomach, which if it be not ſupplied with wholſome nouriſhment, will at laſt ſuck in thoſe humors with which the body moſt abounds. So that if in our converſe we do not enterchange ſober uſeful notions, we ſhall at the beſt but traffique toies and baubles, and moſt commonly infection and poiſon. He therefore that would keep his tongue from betraying himſelf or others to ſin, muſt tune it to a quite contrary Key, make it an inſtrument, an incentive to vertue, by which he ſhall not only ſecure the negative part of his duty, but comply with the poſitive alſo, in employing it to thoſe uſes for which it was given him.

All ſpeech ought to tend to the glory of God,

3. It would be too vaſt an undertaking to preſcribe the particular ſubjects of ſuch diſcourſe, nay indeed impoſſible, becauſe many of them are occaſional, ſuch as cannot aforehand be reduced to any certain account. This only in the general we may reſt upon, that all ſpeech tending to the glory of God, or the good of man, is aright directed. Which is not to be underſtood ſo reſtrictively, as if nothing but Divinity or the neceſſary concerns of human life, may lawfully be brought into diſcourſe: ſomething is to be indulged to common civility, more to the intimaces and endearments of friendſhip, and a competency to thoſe recreative diſcourſes which maintain the chearfulneſs of ſociety; all which are, if moderatly uſed, within the latitude of the rule, as tending (tho in a lower degree) to the well being of men, and by conſequent to the honor of God, who indulges us thoſe innocent refreſhments. But if the ſubordinate uſes come to incroach upon the higher, if we dwell here and look no farther, they then become very ſinful by the exceſs which were not ſo in their nature. That inordinacy ſets them in oppoſition to Gods deſignation, in which they were allowed only a ſecondary place. We ſhould therefore be careful to improve all opportunities of letting our tongues pay their more immediate homage to God, in the duties of praiers and praiſes, making them not only the interpreters of our pious affections, but the promoters of the like in others. And indeed he can ſcarce be thought in earneſt, who praies, *Hallowed be thy name*, and do's not as much endeavour it with men, as he ſolicites it from God.

And the good of our neighbour.

4. And if we anſwer our obligations in this point, we ſhall in it diſcharge the higheſt part of our duty to man alſo: for in whoſe heart ſoever we can implant a true reverential awe of God, we ſow the ſeed of immortality, of an endleſs happy being, the greateſt the moſt ſuperlative good whereof he is capable. Beſides in the interim, we do by it help to manumit and releaſe him from thoſe ſervile drudgeries to vice, under which thoſe remain who live without God in the world. And theſe indeed are benefits worthy

thy the dignity of humane nature to communicate. And it is both ſad and ſtrange to ſee among the multitude and variety of Leagues that are contracted in the world, how few there are of the pious combinations; how thoſe who ſhew themſelves concern'd in all the petty ſecular intereſts of their friends, never take this at all into their care; a pregnant evidence how little true friendſhip there is among men.

The care of others is ill ſhifted of to divines.

5. I know ſome think they ſufficiently excuſe themſelves when they ſhift of this office to Divines, whoſe peculiar buſineſs they ſay it is. But this is as if one who ſees a poor fainting wretch, ſhould forbear to adminiſter a Cordial he has at hand, for fear of intrenching on the Phyſitians Faculty. Many opportunities a Friend or Companion may have which a Divine may want. He often ſees a man in the very fit, and ſo may more aptly apply: for where there is an intimacy of Converſe, men lay themſelves open, diſcover thoſe paſſions, thoſe vices, which they careful veil when a ſtrange, or ſeverer eie approches. Beſides, as ſuch a one may eaſier diſcern the diſeaſe, ſo he has better advantages for adminiſtring remedies: ſo Children will not take thoſe Medicines from the Doctors hand, which they will from a Nurſe or Mother: and we are uſually too Childiſh in what relates to our Souls; look on good counſil from an Eccleſiaſtic as a Divinity Potion, & ſet our ſtomachs againſt it; but a Familiar may inſenſibly inſinuate it into us, and ere we are aware beguile us into health. Yet if Lay Perſons will needs give the Clergy the incloſure of this office, they ſhould at leaſt withdraw thoſe impediments they have laied in their way, by depoſiting thoſe prejudices which will certainly fruſtrate their endeavor. Men have in theſe later daies bin taught to look on Preaching as a thing of form to the Hearers, & of profit only to the Speakers, a *craft whereby*, as *Demetrius* ſaies, *They get their living*. Acts 19.25. But admit it were ſo in this laſt reſpect, yet it do's not infer it ſhould be ſo in the former. If it be a Trade, 'twas ſure thought (as in all Ages but this) a very uſefull one, or elſe there would never have bin ſuch incouragement given to it. No State ever allotted public certain Salaries for a ſet of Men that were thought utterly uſeleſs: and if there be uſe to be made of them, ſhall we loſe our advantages merely becauſe they gain theirs? We are in nothing elſe ſo ſenſeleſs: no man will refuſe counſil from a Phyſician, becauſe he lives by the Profeſſion. 'Tis rather an argument on his ſide, that becauſe ſuch an intereſt of his own depends on it, he has bin the more induſtrious to fit himſelf for it. But not to run farther in this digreſſion, I ſhall apply it to my purpoſe, by making this equitable propoſal, that Lay men will not ſo moralize the common Fable, as neither to admoniſh one another themſelves, nor ſuffer Miniſters to do it without them. And truly 'tis hard if neither of them can be granted when both ought. I am ſure all is little enough that can be don, tho we ſhould have as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Precept upon precept, Line upon line, here a little & there a little*, Iſ.28.13. Mans nature is ſo unattentive to good, that there can ſcarce be too many monitors. We ſee *Satan* tho he have a much ſtronger party in our inclinations, dares not rely upon it, but is ſtill employing his emiſſaries, to confirm & excite them, and if whilſt he has ſo many Agents among us, God ſhall have none, we are like to give but an ill account of our zeal either to God or our neighbor, or of thoſe tongues which were given us to glorify the one, & benefit the other. Indeed without this, our greateſt officiouſneſs in the ſecular concerns of others is no kindneſs. When we ſtrive to advance the fame, to increaſe the fortune of a wicked man, what do we do in it, but enable him to do the more miſchief, by his wealth to foment his own luxuries, and by his reputation commend

them to the practice of others? He only makes his friend truly rich & great, who teaches him to employ thoſe advantages aright: and would men turn their tongues to this ſort of Oratory, they would indeed ſhew they underſtood for what ends they were given them.

Or confin'd to friends & relations.

6. But as all good receives enhancement from its being more diffuſive, ſo theſe attemts ſhould not be confined to ſome one or two intimates or relatives, but be as extenſive as the common needs, or at leaſt as our opportunities. 'Tis a generous ambition to benefit many, to oblige communities: which can no way ſo well be don, as by endeavoring to ſubvert vicious cuſtoms, which are the peſt and poiſons of all ſocieties. The heathens had many ceremonies of luſtrations for their cities and countries, but he that could purify and refine their manners, would indeed attain to the ſubſtance of thoſe ſhadows. And becauſe the Apoſtle tells us that *Evil words corrupt good manners*, 'twould be a fundamental piece of reformation, to introduce a better ſort of converſe into the world: which is an inſtance ſo agreeable to my preſent ſubject, that I cannot Cloſe more pertinently, then to commend the endeavor to the Reader, which if he have bin by this Tract at all convincedof the ſin and miſchief of thoſe Schemes of diſcourſe decyphered in it, cannot be more juſt to his convictions, then by attemting to ſupplant them.

Twere a uſefull attemt to ſet a pattern of innocent and entertaining diſcours.

7. It were indeed a deſign worthy of a noble ſoul, to try to new model the Age in this particular, to make it poſſible for men, to be at once converſable and innocent. I know 'twill be objected, 'tis too vaſt a project for one or many ſingle Perſons to undertake: yet difficulties uſe to animate generous ſpirits, eſpecially when (as here) the very attemt is laudable. But as *Chriſt* ſaies of Wiſdom, ſo may we of Courage. The Children of this world are more daring then the Children of light. The great corrupters of diſcourſe have not bin ſo diſtruſtful of themſelves: for 'tis viſible to any that will reflect, that 'tis within a mans memory ſince much of this monſtrous exorbitancy of diſcourſe grew in faſhion, particularly the Atheiſtical and Blaſphemous. The firſt propugners of it were but few, and durſt then but whiſper their black rudiments, yet the world now ſees what a Harveſt they have from their deviliſh induſtry.

Which could not fail to reliſh with men not utterly vitiated.

8. And ſhall we give over our Clime as forlorn and deſperate, and conclude that nothing which is not venomous will thrive in our Soil. Would ſome of parts and autority but make the experiment, I cannot think that all places are yet ſo vitiated, but that they may meet with many, who would reliſh ſober and ingenuous diſcourſe, and by their example be animated to propagate it to others, but as long as Blaſphemy, Ribauldry, and Detraction ſet up for Wit, and carry it without any competition, we do implicitly yield that title we diſpute not: and 'tis hard to ſay, whether their triumphs be more owing to the boldneſs of ill men, or the puſillanimity of the good. What if upon the trial they ſhould meet with the worſer part of St. *Pauls* fate at Athens, *That ſome will mock*, Acts 17.32. yet perhaps they may partake of the better alſo, and find others that would be willing *to hear them again*, and ſome few at leaſt *may cleave unto them*. And ſure they are too tender and delicate, that will run no hazard, nor be willing to bear a little ſhare in that profane drollery, with which an Apoſtle was, and their God is daily aſſaulted: eſpecially when by this expoſing themſelves, they may hope to give ſome check to that impious liberty. However beſides the ſatisfaction of their own conſciences, they may alſo gain this advantage by the attemt, that it may be a good teſt by which to try their company. For thoſe whom they find impatient of innocent

nocent & profitable converse, they may assure themselves can only ensnare not benefit them; and he is a very weak Gamester, that will be drawn to play upon such terms, as make it highly probable for him to lose, but impossible for him to win. Therefore in that case the advice of *Solomon* is very proper, *Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou preceivest not in him the lips of Knowledg*, Prov. 14. 7.

The undertaker in this design must be sure to be true to his pretensions.

9. But he that will undertake so Heroic an enterprize, must qualifie himself for it, by being true to his own pretensions. He must leave no uneven thred in his loom, or by indulging to any one sort of reprovable discourse himself, defeat all his endeavors against the rest. Those aery Speculators that have writ of the Philosophers Stone, have required many Personal qualifications, strict abstinencies and purities in those who make the experiment. The thing may have this sober application, that those who would turn this Iron Age into Gold, that would convert our rusty drossy Converse into a purer strein, must be perfectly clean themselves. For alas what effect can that man hope from his most zealous reprehensions, who laies himself open to recrimination? He that hears a man bitterly inveigh against Blasphemy and profaness, and yet (in that almost the same breath) hears his monitor inveigh as bitterly against his Neighbor, will scarce think him a good guide of his tongue, that has but half the mastery of his own. Let every man therefore be sure to begin at the right end of his work, to wash his own mouth clean, before he prescribe Gargarisms to others. And to that purpose let him impartially reflect on all the undue liberties he has given his tongue, whether those which have bin here remarked, or those others which he may find in all Practical books, especially in (the most Practical of all books) his own Conscience. And when he has trac'd his talk thro all its wild rambles, let him bring home his stray; not like the lost sheep with joy, but with tears of penitence and contrition, and keep a strict watch over it that it break not lose again; nay farther require it to make some restitution for the trespass it has committed in its former excursions, to restore to God what it has rob'd of his Honor, by devoting it self an instrument of his service; to his Neighbor what it has detracted from him, by wiping off that sullage it has cast upon his Fame; and to himself by defacing those ill Characters of vanity and folly it has imprinted on him. Thus may the Tongue cure its own sting, and by a kind of Sympathetic vertue, the wound may be healed by dressing the weapon. But alas when we have don all, the Tongue is so slippery that it will often be in danger to deceive our watch: nay it has a secret intelligence with the heart, which like a corrupted Goaler is too apt to connive at its escape. Let us therefore strengthen our guards, call in him who sees all the secret practices of our treacherous hearts, and commit both them and our tongues to his custody. Let us say with the Psalmist, *Try me, O Lord, and seek the ground of my heart.* Psal. 129. 23. And with him again, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips, O let not my heart be inclined to any evil thing*, Psal. 141. 3. And if *hand thus join in hand*, Prov. 16. 5. if Gods grace be humbly invoked, and our own endeavour honestly employed, even this *unruly evil* of the Tongue (as St. *James* calls it) Chap. 3. 8. may be in some degree tamed. If now and then it get a little out by stealth, yet it will not like the Demoniac be so raving, as quite to break all its chains. If we cannot alwaies secure our selves from inadvertence & surprize, but that a forbidden word may sometimes escape us, yet we may from deliberate willful offences of the Tongue. And tho we should all aspire higher, yet if we can but reach this, we ought not to

excuſe our ſelves (upon remaining infirmities) from the Chriſtian generous undertaking, I was recommending, the reforming of others. Indeed I had made a very impertinent exhortation to that, if this degree of fitneſs may not be admitted; for I fear there would be none on earth could attemt it upon other terms: the world muſt ſtill remain as it is, and await only the Tongues of Angels to reduce it. Nor need we fear that cenſure of Hypocriſy which we find, *Matt.* 7. 5. for the caſe is very differing. 'Tis indeed as ridiculous as inſolent an attemt, for one that has a Beam in his own eie, to pretend to caſt a Mote out of his brothers: but it holds not on the contrary, that he that has a Mote in his own, ſhould not endeavour to remove the Beam in his brothers. Every ſpeck do's not blind a man, nor do's every infirmity make one unable to diſcern, or incompetent to reprove the groſſer faults of others.

The man of vertue, if he do not reform others, will not loſe his pains ſince he will ſave himſelf.

10. Yet after all let us as much as is poſſible clear our eies even of this mote, and make our Copy as worth tranſcribing as we can: for certainly the beſt inſtrument of reformation is example: and tho admonition may ſometimes be neceſſary, yet there are many circumſtances required to the right ordering of that, ſo that it cannot alwaies be practicable, but a good example ever is. Beſides it has a ſecret magnetic vertue, like the Loadſtone it attracts by a power of which we can give no account: ſo that it ſeems to be one of thoſe occult qualities, thoſe ſecrets in nature, which have puzled the inquirers, only experience demonſtrates it to us. I am ſure it do's (too abundantly) in ill examples, and I doubt not might do the like in good, if they were as plentiful experimented. And that they may be ſo, let every man be ambitious to caſt in his mite: for tho two make but a farthing, yet they may be multiplied to the vaſteſt ſum. However if a man cannot reform others, yet I am ſure twill be worth his while, ſo to *ſave himſelf from this untoward generation*, Acts 2. 40. I have now preſented the Tongue under a double aſpect, ſuch as may juſtify the ancient Definition of it, that it is the worſt and beſt part of man, the beſt in its original and deſign, and the worſt in its corruption and degeneration. In David the man after Gods heart it was his *glory*, Pſal. 57. 8. *The beſt member that he had*, Pſal. 108. 1. *But in the wicked it cuts like a ſharp Razor*, Pſ. 52. 2. *'Tis as the venom of Aſps* Pſ. 140. 3. The Tongues from heaven were *Cloven* Acts 2. 2. to be the more diffuſive of good: but thoſe that are *fired from hell* are forked, *Jam.* 3. 6. to be the more impreſſive of miſchief: it muſt be referred to every mans choice, into which of the forms he will mould his. Solomon tells us *Death and Life are in the power of the Tongue*, and that not only directly in regard of the good or ill we may do to others, but reflexively alſo, in reſpect of what may rebound to our ſelves. Let *Moſes* then make the inference from *Solomons* premiſes, *Therefore chuſe life*, Deut. 30. 15. a propoſal ſo reaſonable, ſo agreeable to nature, that no floriſhes can render it more inviting. I ſhall therefore leave it to the Readers contemplation, and ſhall hope that if he pleaſe but to revolve it with that ſerioufneſs which the importance exacts, he will new ſet his tongue, compoſe it to thoſe pious Divine ſtreins, which may be a proper preludium to thoſe Allelujahs he hopes eternally to ſing.

F I N I S.

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THE ART OF CONTENTMENT.

The Preface.

THe desire of happiness is so coessential with our nature, so interwoven and incorporate with it; that nothing but the dissolution of the whole frame can extinguish it. This runs thro the whole race of mankind, and amidst the infinit variety of other inclinations, preserves its self entire. The most various contradictory tempers do yet conspire in this, and men of the most unequal fortunes, are yet equal in their wishes of being happy.

The desire of happiness is the first and most universal impression upon nature.

But this concurrence as to the end is not more universal then the disagreement about the way. Every man would have happiness, but wherein that consists, or how it is to be attain'd, has bin very diversly opin'd. Indeed the ultimate supreme happiness as it is originally inherent in God, so it is wrapt up in those clouds and darkness, which, as the Psalmist saies, are round about him *Psal.* 18. 11. And we can see nothing of it, but in those gleams & raies he is pleas'd to dart out upon us; so that all our estimates as our final felicity, must be mesur'd by those revelations he has made of it.

This concurrence in the end is not more universal then the disagreement about the way.

But one would think our temporal happiness were as much a mystery as our eternal, to see what variety of blind pursuits are made after it. One mans thinks 'tis seated on the top pinacle of honor, and climbs till perhaps he falls head-long. Another thinks it a mineral, that must be dig'd out of the earth, and toils to lade himself with thick clay, *Hab.* 2. 6. and at last finds a grave, where he sought his tresure. A third supposes it consists in the variety of plesures, and wearies himself in that pursuit, which only cloies, and disappoints. Yet every one of these can read you lectures of the gross mistake and folly of the other, whilst himself is equally deluded.

Even temporal happiness seems to be a mystery.

Thus do men chase an imaginary good, till they meet with real evils; herein exposing themselves to the same cheat Laban *put upon* Jacob, they serve for Rachel, and are rewarded with Leah, court fancied beauty, and marry loath'd deformity. Such delusive felicities as these are the largesses of the Prince of the Air, who once attemted to have enveigled even Christ himself, *Matt.* 4.

The pursuit of imaginary goods, is answerd by disappointment.

But Gods proposals are more sincere: he knows how sandy, how false a foundation all these external things must make, and therefore warns us not to build so much as our present satisfaction upon them, but shews us a more certain, a more compendious way to acquire what we gasp after, by telling us that as Godliness in respect of the next, so contentment for this world is great gain 1 *Tim.* 6. 6. It is indeed the unum necessarium, the one point in which all the lines of worldly happiness are concentred, and to complete its excellence, 'tis to be had at home: nay indeed only there. We need not ramble in wild pursuits after it, we may form it within our own breasts: no man want materials for it, that knows but how to put them together.

Almighty God proposes a short & easy method, for the attaining happiness, the being contented.

And the directing to that skill is the only design of the ensuing Tract, which coming upon so kind an errand, may at least hope for an unprejudic'd reception. Contentment is a thing we all profess to aspire to, and therefore it cannot be thought an unfriendly office to endeavor to conduct men to it. How far the ensuing considerations may tend to that end, I must leave to the judgment, and experience of the Reader, only desiring him that he will weigh them with that seriousness which befits a thing wherein both his happiness and duty are concern'd: for in this (as in many other instances) God has so twisted them together, that we cannot be innocently miserable. The present infelicities of our murmurs and impatiencies, have an appendant guilt, which will consign us to a more irreversible state of dissatisfaction hereafter.

The directing to this skill is the design of the ensuing Tract.

THE Art of Contentment.

SECT. I.

Of the neceſſary Connexion between Happineſs and Contentment.

Gods deſign in the creation, was not to receive acceſſion to his own happineſs, but communicate it to others.

1. GOD who is eſſentially happy in himſelf, can receive no acceſſion to his felicity by the poor contributions of men. He cannot therefore be ſuppos'd to have made them upon intuition of increaſing, but communicating his happineſs. And this his original deſign is very viſible in all the parts of his œconomy towards them. When lapſed man had counterplotted againſt himſelf, defeated the purpoſe of the Divine goodneſs, and plunged his whole nature into the oppoſite ſtate of endleſs miſery; he yet reinforc'd his firſt deſign, and an expedient as full of wonder as mercy, the death of his Son, recovers him to his former capacity of bliſs. And that it might not only be a bare capacity, he has added all other methods proper to work upon a rational creature. He has ſhewed him his danger, ſet before him in perſpective that eternal Tophet, whieh he is advis'd to ſhun. On the other ſide he has no leſs lively deſcrib'd the heavenly Jeruſalem, the Celeſtial country to which he is to aſpire: nay farther has levell'd his road to it, leads him not as he did the Iſraelites thro the wilderneſs, thro intricate mazes, to puzle his underſtanding; thro *a land of drought, wherein were fiery Serpents and Scorpions*, Deut. 8. 15. to diſcourage and affright him: but has in the Goſpel chalkt out a plain, a ſafe, nay a pleaſant path; as much ſuperiour both in the the eaſe of the way, and in the end to which it leads, as Heaven is to Canaan.

The ſecuring this happineſs to men is the buſineſs of Chriſtian religion.

2. By doing this he has not only ſecured our grand and ultimate happineſs, but provided for our intermedial alſo. Thoſe Chriſtian duties which are to carry us to heaven, are our refreſhments, our viaticum in our journy: his yoke is not to gall and fret us, but an engine by which we may with eaſe (and almoſt inſenſibly) draw all the clogs and incumbrances of human life. For whether we take Chriſtianity in its whole complex, or in its ſeveral ad diſtinct branches, 'tis certainly the moſt excellent, the moſt compendious art of happy living: its very tasks are rewards, and its precepts are nothing but a divine ſort of Alchymy, to ſublime at once our nature and our pleſures.

And moſt particularly expreſs in the precept of acquieſcence & contentment.

3. This may be evidenc'd in every particular of the Evangelical law: but having formerly made ſome attemt towards it in another * Tract, I ſhall not here reaſſume the whole ſubject. I ſhall only ſingle out one particular precept, wherein happineſs is not (as in the others) only implied, and muſt be catcht at the rebound by conſequence and event; but is literally

** Decay of Chriſtian Piety.*

literally expreſt, and is the very matter of the duty; I mean the precept of acquieſcence and *Contentment*, Happineſs and this true genuine Contentment, being terms ſo convertible, that to bid us be content, is but another phraſe for bidding us be happy.

4. Temporal enjoiments, ſuch as are pleſure, wealth, honor, and the reſt, tho they make ſpecious pretences to be the meſure of human happineſs, are all of them juſtly diſcarded by the Philoſopher in his Ethics, upon this one conſideration, that coming from abroad they may be with-held or taken from us: and our tenure being precarious, we even for that reaſon are unhappy in our moſt deſiderable poſſeſſions, becauſe we are ſtill liable to be ſo. And therefore he concludes, that felicity muſt be placed in the mind and ſoul, which ſtands without the reach of fortune; and in the practice of vertue, which in its own nature, and not in its contingent uſe is truly good, and therefore certainly renders the poſſeſſors ſuch. *Temporal enjoiments are juſtly diſcarded by heathen philoſophy, which lodges felicity in the practice of vertue.*

5. But this practice being diffuſed thro the whole extent of Moral duty, *Epictetus* thought he had deſerved well of human nature, when he drew it up in two ſhort words, to *ſuſtain* and *abſtain*: that is, to bear with conſtancy adverſe events, and with moderation enjoy thoſe that are proſperous. Which complexure of Philoſophy is yet more fully, as well as more compendiouſly expreſt in the ſingle notion of *Contentment*: which involves the patient bearing of all miſadventures, and generous contemt of ſenſual illectives. This ſtate of mind the Greeks expreſs by calling it αὐτάρκεια or ſelf-ſufficiency, which, we know properly ſpeaking, is one of the incommunicable attributes of the Divine nature: and the Stoics expreſly pretend, that by it mortal men are enabled to rival their Gods; in *Seneca's* phraſe, to make a controverſy with *Jupiter* himſelf. But abating the inſolent blaſphemy of an independent felicity, Chriſtianity acknowleges a material truth in the aſſertion: and St. *Paul* declares of himſelf, that having *learnt how to want and how to abound, and in whatever ſtate he happens to be in, therewith to be content: he is able to do all things thro Chriſt that ſtrengthens him*, Phil. 4. 11, 12, 13. *and having nothing, to poſſeſs all things*, 2 Cor. 6. 10. *A compendium whereof is the before mention'd duty of contentment.*

6. Which great event comes about, not only becauſe all good things are eminently in the Divine nature, and he who by Vertue and Religion poſſeſſes Him, thereby in a full equivalence has every thing; but alſo upon human meſures, and the principles of Philoſophy: the compendious addreſs to wealth, as *Plato* rightly obſerv'd, being not to encreaſe poſſeſſions, but leſſen deſires. And if ſo, 'twill follow that the contented man muſt be abundantly provided for, being ſo entirely ſatisfied with what he has, as to have no deſires at all. Indeed 'tis truly ſaid of covetous men, and is equally verified of all who have any deſire to gratify, that they want no leſs what they have, then what they have not: but the reſerve of that Paradox is really made good by *Contentment*, which beſtow's on men the enjoiment of whatever they have, and alſo whatever they have not; and by teaching to want nothing, abundantly ſecures not to want happineſs. *The contented perſon tho he has nothing poſſeſſes all things.*

7. On the other ſide this one grace being abſent, it is not in the power of any ſucceſs of affluence to make life a tolerable thing. Let all the materials of earthly happineſs be amaſt together, and flung upon one man, they will without contentment be but like the fatal prize of *Tarpeia's* treaſon, who was preſt to death with the weight of her booty. He that has the elements of felicity, and yet cannot form them into a ſatisfaction, is more deſperately miſerable then he that wants them: for he who wants has yet ſomthing to hope for, and thinks if he had them he might be happy; but he who inſignificantly poſſeſſes them, has no reſerve, has not ſo much as the *Without this no ſucceſs or affluence can make happy.*

Flattery of an expectation: for he has nothing left to desire, and yet can be as little said to enjoy.

Outward goods are the earth part & dross of happiness; content is the spirit.

8. He therefore that would have the extract, the quintessence of happiness, must seek it in Content. All outward accessions are but the dross and earthy part; this alone is the spirit, which when 'tis once separated, depends not upon the fate of the other; but preserves its vigor when that is destroi'd. St. *Paul* whom I before mention'd, is a ready instance of it, who professes to be *content in whatever state*; Contentment being not so inseparately link'd to exernal things, but that they may subsist apart. That those are often without it we are too sure, and that it may be without them is as certainly true; tho by our own default we have not so many examples of it. A heart that rightly computes the difference between temporals and eternals, may resolve with the Ptophet, *Altho the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stall; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation*, Hab. 3. 17, 18. He that has God, need not much deplore the want of any thing else: nor can he that considers the plenty and glory of his future state, be much dejected with the want or the abjectness of his present.

Both the one and other are indulgd by God, in this world.

9. Yet so indulgent is God to our infirmities, that knowing how unapt our impatient natures are to *walk* only *by faith, and not at all by sight*, 2 Cor. 5. 7. he is pleased to give us fair antepasts of satisfaction here, dispenses his temporal blessings tho not equally, yet so universally, that he that has least, has enough to oblige not only his acquiescence, but his thankfulness. Tho every man has not all he wishes, yet he has that which is more valuable then that he complains to want; nay which he himself could worse spare, were it put to his option.

All men are so much beyond their merit provided for; that 'tis a wonder any should be discontentes.

10. And now from such a dispositure of things who would not expect that mankind should be the chearfullest part of the creation: that the *sun should* not more *rejoice to run his course*, Psal. 19. 5. then man should to finish his: that a journy which has so blessed an end, and such good accommodation by the way, should be past with all imaginable alacrity, and that we should live here practicers and learners of that state of unmix'd interminable joies to which we aspire. But alas if we look upon the universality of men, we shall find it nothing so; but while all other creatures gladsomly follow the order of their creation, take pleasure in those things God has assign'd for them, we with a sullen perverseness quarrel at what we should enjoy, and in every thing make it our business, not to fit it for our use, but to find out some conceled quality which may render it unfit. We look insidiously upon our blessings, like men that design'd only to pick a quarrel, and start a pretence for mutining. From hence it is that man who was design'd the Lord of the world, to whose satisfactions all inferior beings were to contribute, is now the unhappiest of the creatures: nay as if the whole order of the universe were inverted, he becomes slave to his own vassals, courts all these little sublunary things with such passion, that if they prove coy and fly his embraces, he is mad and desperate: if they fling themselves into his Arms, he is then glutted and satiated; like *Amnon he hates more then he loved*, 2 Sam. 13. 15. and is sicker of his possession, then he was of his desire.

The entertaining irregular desires, makes our satisfaction impossible.

10. And thus will it ever be till we can keep our desires more at home, and not suffer them to ramble after things without our reach. That honest Roman, who from his extraordinary industry upon his little spot of ground recei-

received ſuch an increaſe, as brought him under ſuſpicion of witchcraft, is a good example for us. God has placed none of us in ſo barren a ſoil, in ſo forlorn a ſtate, but there is ſomthing in it which may afford us comfort; let us husband that to the utmoſt, and 'tis ſcarce imaginable what improvements even he that appears the moſt miſerable may take of his condition. But if in a ſullen humor we will not cultivate our own field, becauſe we have perhaps more mind to our neighbors, we may thank our ſelves if we ſtarve. The deſpiſing of what God has already given us, is ſure but a cold invitation to farther bounty. Men are indeed forced ſomtimes to reward the mutinous: but God is not to be ſo attaqued, nor is it that ſort of violence which can ever force Heaven. The Heathen could ſay that *Jupiter* ſent his plagues among the poorer ſort of men, becauſe they were alwaies repining: and indeed there is ſo much of truth in the obſervation, that our impatience and diſcontent at our preſent condition, is the greateſt provocation to God to make it worſe.

11. It muſt therefore be reſolv'd to be very contrary to our Intereſt, and ſurely 'tis no leſs to our Duty. It is ſo if we do but own our ſelves men, for in that is impli'd a ſubordination and ſubmiſſion to that power that made us ſo; and diſpute his managery of the world, to make other diſtributions of it then he has don, is to renounce our ſubjection, and ſet up for dominion. But this is yet more intolerable as we are Chriſtians, it being a ſpecial part of the Evangelical diſcipline, chearfully to conform to any condition: to *know how to be abaſed, and how to abound, to be full and to be hungry*, Phil. 4. 12. *to be careful for nothing*, ver. 6. Nay ſo little do's Chriſt give countenance to our peeviſh diſcontents, our wanton outcries when we are not hurt, that he requires more then a contentment, an exultancy and tranſport of joy even under the heavieſt preſſures, under reproches and perſecutions. *Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy*, Luke 6.23. And ſure nothing can be more contrary to this, then to be alwaies whining and complaining, crying in the Prophets phraſe, *my leaneſs, my leaneſs, wo is me.* Iſa. 24. 16. when perhaps *Moſes*'s ſimile do's better fit our ſtate, *Jeſurun waxed fat, and kicked*, Deut. 32. 15. *This is equally repugnant to intereſt and duty.*

12. And as this querulous humor is againſt our intereſt and duty, ſo it is viſibly againſt our eaſe. 'Tis a ſickneſs of the mind, a perpetual gnawing and craving of the appetite without any poſſibility of ſatisfaction: and indeed is the ſame in the heart which the *Caninus appetitus* is in the ſtomach; to which we may aptly enough apply that deſcription we find in the Prophet, *he ſhall ſnatch on the right hand and be hungry, and he ſhall eat on the left and not be ſatisfied*, Iſa. 9. 20. Where this ſharp, this fretting humor abounds, nothing converts into nouriſhment: every new acceſſion do's but excite ſome new deſire; and as 'tis obſerv'd of a trencher-fed dog, that he taſts not one bit for the greedy expectation of the next, ſo a diſcontented mind is ſo intent upon his purſuits, that he has no reliſh of his acqueſts. So that what the Prophet ſpeaks of the Covetous, is equally appliable to all other ſorts of Male-contents: *he enlarges his deſire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be ſatisfied*, Hab. 2. 5. And ſure if the *deſire accompliſhed* be as *Solomon* ſaies *ſweet to the ſoul*, Prov. 13. 19. it muſt be exceedingly bitter, to the thus condemned to endleſs unaccompliſhable deſires; and yet this is the torture which every repining uncontented ſpirit provides for its ſelf. *And alſo our eaſe.*

13. What a madneſs is it then for men to be ſo deſperatly bent againſt their intereſt and duty, as to renounce even their eaſe too for company? One would think this age were ſenſual enough to be at defiance with the leaſt *In ſo ſenſual an age as this we live in, one would expect what is uneaſy ſhould be avoided.*

leaſt ſhadow of uneaſineſs. It is ſo I am ſure where it ought not: every thing is laborious when 'tis in compliance with their duty: a few minutes ſpent in praier *Oh what a wearineſs is it* ! Mal. 2. 19. If they chance but to miſs a meal, they are ready to cry out, their *knees are weak thro faſting*, Pſal. 109. 23. yet they can without regret, or any ſelf-compaſſion, macerate and cruciate themſelves with anxious cares and vexations, and, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 1 Tim. 6. 10. *pierce themſelves thro with many ſorrows*. That propoſal therefore which was very raſhly made by S. *Peter* to our Savior, *Maſter pity thy ſelf*, Mat. 16. 22. which we render *be it far from thee*, would here be an adviſed motion to the generality of mankind, who are commonly made unhappy not by any thing without them, but by thoſe reſtleſs impatiences that are within them.

The whole affair will be uſefully brought to rational conſideration,

14. It may therefore be a ſeaſonable office to endevor the appeaſing theſe ſtorms, by recalling them to thoſe ſober rational conſiderations, which may ſhew as well the folly, as uneaſineſs of this repining unſatisfiable humor. 'Tis certain that in true reaſoning, we can find nothing whereon to found it, but a great deal to enforce the contrary. Indeed 'tis ſo much againſt the dictate of reaſonable nature to affect dammage, ſin, and torment, that were there nothing elſe to be ſaid but what I have already mention'd, it might competently diſcover the great unreaſonableneſs of this ſin.

And reduced to ſeven diſtinct heads.

15. But we need not confine our appeal to reaſon, as it is only a judg of utility and advantage; but enlarge it to another notion, as it is judg of equity and right: in which reſpect alſo it gives as clear and peremtory a ſentence againſt all murmuring and impatience. To evince this I ſhall inſiſt upon theſe particulars. 1. That God is debtor to no man, and therefore what ever he affords to any, it is upon bounty not of right, a benevolence not a due. 2. That this bounty is not ſtreight or narrow, confin'd to ſome few particular perſons, and wholly overskipping the reſt, but more or leſs univerſally diffuſed to all. So that he who has the leaſt, cannot juſtly ſay but he has bin liberally dealt with. 3. That if we compare our bleſſings with our allaies, our good things with our evil, we ſhall find our good far ſurmounting. 4. That we ſhall find them yet more ſo, if we compare them with the good we have don, as on the contrary we ſhall find our afflictions ſcarce diſcernible if ballanc'd with our ſins. 5. That as God is the Rector of the univerſe, ſo it appertains to him to make ſuch allotments, ſuch diſtributions, as may beſt preſerve the ſtate of the whole. 6. That God notwitſtanding that univerſal care, has alſo a peculiar aſpect on every particular Perſon, and diſpoſes to him what he diſcerns beſt for him in ſpecial. 7. If we compare our adverſities, with thoſe of other men, we ſhall alwaies find ſomthing that equals if not exceeds our own. All theſe are certain irrefragable truths, and there is none of them ſingle but may, if well preſt upon the mind, charm it into a calmneſs and reſignation; but when there is ſuch a conſpiration of arguments, it muſt be a very obſtinate perverſneſs that can reſiſt them: or ſhould they fail to enforce a full conviction; will yet introduce thoſe ſubſidiary proofs, which I have to alledg, ſo advantagiouſly, as will being put altogether amount unto perfect and uncontroulable Evidence.

SECT. II.

Of Gods abſolute Soveraignty.

1. THe firſt propoſition that God is debtor to no man, is too clear and apparent to require much of illuſtration: for as he is a free agent and may act as he pleaſes, ſo he is the ſole proprietary and can wrongfully detain from none, becauſe all original right is in himſelf. This has bin ſo much acknowledg'd by the blindeſt Heathens, that none of them durſt make inſolent addreſſes to their Gods, challenge any thing of them as of debt, but by ſacrifices and praiers own'd their dependence and wants, and implor'd ſupplies. And ſure Chriſtianity teaches us not to be more ſawcy. If thoſe Deities who ow'd their very being to their votaries, were yet acknowledg'd to be the ſpring and ſource of all, we can with no pretence deny it to that ſupreme power in whom *we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 28. For if it were merely an act of his choice to give us a being, all his ſubſequent bounties can have no other original then his own good pleſure. We could put no obligation upon God before we were: and when we began to be, we were his creatures, and ſo by the moſt indiſputable right owe our ſelves to him, but can have no antecedent title on which to clame any thing from him: ſo that the Apoſtle might well make the challenge which he doth on Gods behalf, *who hath given any thing unto him, and it ſhall be recompenc'd unto him again?* Rom. 11. 25. *God is debtor to no man.*

2. Now ordinary diſcretion teaches us not to be too bold in our expectations from one to whom we can plead no right. It has as little of prudence as of modeſty, to preſs impudently upon the bounty of a Patron, and do's but give him temtation (at leaſt pretence) to deny. And if it be thus with men, who poſſibly may ſometimes have an intereſt, ſometimes a vanity to oblige us; it muſt much more be ſo towards God, who cannot be in want of us, and therefore need not buy us: *our good*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *extends not to him.* Pſ. 16. 2. He has a fundamental right in that little we are, which will ſtand good tho it ſhould never be corroborated by greater benefits. With what an humble baſhfulneſs ſhould we then ſue for any thing, who have no argument to invite the leaſt donation? being already ſo preingag'd, that we cannot mortgage ſo much as our ſelves in conſideration of any new favor: and ſurely extravagant hopes do very ill befit people in this condition. We ſee the modeſty of good *Mephiboſheth*, who tho he was by a ſlanderous accuſation outed of half the eſtate *David* had given him, yet upon a reflexion that he deriv'd it all from his good pleſure, diſputed not the ſentence, but chearfully reſign'd the whole to the ſame diſpoſure, from which he received it, ſaying, *Yea let him take all.* 1 Sam. 19. 30. A rare example and fit for imitation, as being adapted to the preſent caſe, not only in that one circumſtance of his having receiv'd all from the King, but alſo in that of the attainder of his blood, which he confeſſes in the former part of the verſe, for *all my fathers houſe were but dead men before my Lord.* And alas may we not ſay the very ſame? Was not our whole race tainted in our firſt parent? So that if God had not the primary title of vaſallage, he would in our fall have acquir'd that of confiſcation and eſcheat. And can we think our ſelves then in terms to capitulate and make our own conditions, and expect God ſhould humour us in all our wild demands? *Therefore no man can demand any thing from him.*

3. This

The doing ſo is defiance to God. 3. This is indeed to keep up that old rebellion of our Progenitor, for that conſiſted in a diſcontent with that portion God had aſſign'd him, and coveting what he had reſtrain'd him. Nay indeed it comes up to the height of the Devils propoſal, the attemting *to be as God.* Gen. 3. 5. For 'tis an endevor to wreſt the managery out of his hands, to ſuperſede his Autority of diſpenſing to us, and to carve for our ſelves. This is ſo mad an inſolence, that were it poſſible to ſtate a caſe exactly parallel between man and man, it would raiſe the indignation of any that but pretended to ingenuity. Yet this is, without Hyperbole, the true meaning of every murmuring repining thought we entertain.

Which tho a great, is a general inſolence & injuſtice. 4. But as bad as it is, who is there of us, that can in this particular ſay, *we have made our heart clean?* Prov. 20. 9. 'Tis true we make ſome formal acknowledgment ſomtimes that we receive all from Gods gift, cuſtom teaches us from our infancy after every meal we eat to give him thanks (tho even that is now thought too much reſpect, and begins to be diſcarded as unfaſhionable.) Yet ſure he cannot be thought to do that in earneſt, that has all the time of his eating bin grumbling that his table abounds not with ſuch delicacies as his neighbors. And yet at this rate God knows are moſt of our thanſgivings. Indeed we have not ſo much ordinary civility to God, as we have to men. The common proverb teaches us not too curiouſly to pry into the blemiſhes of what is given us: but on Gods gifts we ſit as Cenſors, nicely examine every thing which is any way diſagreable to our fancies, and as if we dealt with him under the notion of chapmen, diſparage it, as *Solomon* ſaies buyers uſe to, *it is nought, it is nought ſaith the buyer*, Prov. 20. 14. Nay we ſeem yet more abſurdly to change the ſcene, and as if God were to make oblations to us, we as critically obſerve the defects of his benefactions, as the Levitical Prieſts were to do thoſe of the ſacrifice, and (like angry Deities) ſcornfully reject, what ever do's not perfectly anſwer our wanton appetites.

And a high provocation of God to withdraw what he has given. 5. And now ſhould God take us at our words, withdraw all thoſe bleſſings which we ſo faſtidiouſly deſpiſe, what condition were we in? 'Tis ſure we have nothing to plead in reverſe of that judgment. There is nothing in it againſt juſtice: for he takes but his own. This he intimates to *Iſrael*, Hoſ. 2. 9. I will *return and take away my corn in time thereof, and my wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax:* in which he aſſerts his own propriety, my corn, my wine, &c. and recalls them to the remembrance that they were but uſufructuaries: and 'tis as evident that our tenure is but the ſame. Nay this proceeding would not be repugnant even to mercy, for even that is not oblig'd ſtill to proſtitute it ſelf to our contemt. I am ſure ſuch a tolerance is beyond all the meſures of human lenity. Should any of us offer an alms to an indigent wretch, and he when he ſees 'tis Silver, ſhould murmur and exclame that it is not Gold, would we not draw back our hand, and reſerve our charity of a more worthy object? 'Tis true indeed Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts, not our narrow bowels equal meſures for the divine compaſſions, and we experimentally find that his long-ſuffering infinitly exceeds ours, yet we know he do's in the parable of the Lord and the ſervant, *Matt.* 18. declare that he will proportion his mercy by ours in that inſtance; and we have no promiſe that he will not do it in this: nay we have all reaſon to expect that he ſhould; for ſince his wiſdom promts him to do nothing in vain, and all his bounty to us is deſign'd to make us happy, when he ſees that end utterly fruſtrated by our diſcontents, to what purpoſe ſhould he continue that to us which we will be never the better for?

6. Be-

he God almighty be patient, yet he is not insensible.

6. Besides tho he be exceedingly patient, yet he is not negligent or insensible; he takes particular notice, not only with what diligence we employ, but with what affections we resent every of his blessings. And as ingratitude is a vice odious to men, so it is extremely provoking to God: so that in this sense also, the words of our Savior are most true, *from him that hath not* (*i.e.*) that hath not a grateful sense and value, *shall be taken away even that he hath*, Matt. 25. 29. But we may find a threatning of this kind yet more express to *Israel*, *because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with gladness and with joifulness of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, whom the Lord God will send among thee, in hunger and in thirst and in nakedness and in want of all things*, Deut. 28. 27, 28. a sad and dismal inversion, yet founded wholly in the want of that chearful recognition which God expected from them. And if *Israel* the lot of his own inheritance, that people whom he had singled out from all the nations of the world, could thus forfeit his favor by unthankfulness, sure none of us can suppose we have any surer entail of it. In a word as God loves a chearful giver, so he also loves a chearful receiver. One that complies with his end in bestowing, by taking a just complacence in his gifts. But the querulous and unsatisfied, reproch his bounty: accuse him of illiberality and narrowness of mind. So that he seems even in his honor engag'd to bring them to a righter apprehension of him, and by a deprivation teach them the value of those good things, which they could not learn by the enjoiment.

If sense of duty cannot persuade against murmuring, consideration of interest should do it.

7. If therefore ingenuity and gratitude cannot, yet at least let prudence and self-love engage us against this sin of *Murmuring*, which we see do's abundantly justify the Character the Wise man gives when he tells us *'tis unprofitable*, Wis. 1. 11. he might have said pernicious also, for so it evidently is in its effects. Let us then arm our selves against it, and to that purpose impress deeply upon our minds the present consideration, that God ows us nothing, and that what ever we receive is an alms, and not a tribute. *Diogenes* being asked what wine drank the most plesant, answered, that which is drunk at anothers cost. And this circumstance we can never miss of to recommend our good things to us: for be they little or much, they come gratis. When therefore in a pettish mood we find our selves apt to charge God foolishly, and to think him strait-handed towards us, let us imagine we hear God expostulating with us, as the housholder in the parable, *Friend I do thee no wrong: is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* Matt. 20. 15. If God have not the right of disposing, let us find out those that have, and see how much better we shall speed: but if he hath, let us take heed of disputing with him. We that subsist merely by his favor, had need court and cherish it by all the arts of humble observance. Every man is ready to say how ill beggary and pride to agree. The first qualification we cannot put off; O let us not provide it of the other so inconvenient, so odious an adjunct. Let us leave off prescribing to God (which no ingenuous man would do to an earthly benefactor) and let us betake our selves to a more holy and successful policy, the acknowledgment of past mercies, and our own unworthiness. This was *Jacobs* method, *I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shew'd unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands*, and with this humble preface he introduces his petition for rescue in his present distress, *Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother*, &c. Gen. 32. 10, 11. An excellent pattern of Divine Rhetoric, which the success demonstrates to have bin very

prevalent. And we cannot tranſcribe a better copy, to render our deſires as ſucceſsful. Indeed we are ſo utterly deſtitute of all arguments from our ſelves, that we can make no reaſonable form of addreſs, if we found it not in ſomthing of God: and there is nothing even in him adapted to our purpoſe, but his mercy, nor can that be ſo advantageouſly urged by any thing, as by the former inſtances it has given of it ſelf: for as God only is fit to be a precedent to himſelf, ſo he loves to be ſo. Thus we find, not only *Moſes*, but God often recollecting his miraculous favors towards *Iſrael*, as an argument to do more: let us therefore accoſt him in his own way, and by a frequent and grateful recounting of his former mercies, engage him to future. Nor need we be at a loſs for matter of ſuch recollection, if we will but ſeriouſly conſider what we have already received, which is the ſubject of the next Section.

SECT. III.

Of Gods Unlimited Bounty.

Ingratitude is the moſt criminal imputation which can be fixt upon a man.

1. IT is the known character of an unworthy nature, to write injuries in Marble, and benefits in Duſt: and however ſome (as *Seneca* well obſerves) may acquit themſelves of this imputation as to man, yet ſcarce any do ſo in relation to God. 'Tis true indeed the charge muſt be a little varied; for God neither will nor can do us injury: yet we receive any thing that is adverſe with ſuch a reſentment as if it were, and engrave that in our memories with indelible characters, whilſt his great and real benefits are either not at all obſerv'd, or with ſo tranſient an advertence, that the compariſon of duſt is beyond our pitch, and we may be more properly ſaid to write them in water. Nay ſo far are we from keeping records and regiſters of his favors, that even thoſe ſtanding and fixt ones which ſenſe can promt us to (without the aid of our memories) cannot obtain our notice.

All complaining is fonnded in this

2. Were it not thus, it were impoſſible for men to be ſo perpetually in the complaing Key, as if their voices were capable of no other ſound. One wants this, and another that, and a third ſomthing beyond them both, and ſo on *ad infinitum*; when all this while every one of them enjoies a multitude of good things without any remark. That very breath wherewith they utter their complaints, is a bleſſing, and a fundamental one too: for if God ſhould withdraw that, they were incapable of whatſoever elſe they either have, or deſire. 'Tis true that ſome mens impatiencies have riſen ſo high, as to caſt away life, becauſe it was not clothed with all circumſtances they wiſht. Yet theſe are rare inſtances, and do only ſhew ſuch mens deprav'd judgment of things. A rich Jewel is not the leſs valuable, becauſe a mad man in his raving fit flings it into the fire: but as to the generality of men, the devil (tho a liar) gave a true account of their ſenſe, when he ſaid, *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life.* Job 2. 4. And tho perhaps in an angry fit many men have with *Jonas*, Chap. 4. 3. *wiſht to die*, yet ten to one ſhould death then come, they would be as willing to divert it, as was the man in the Apologue, who wearied with his burden of ſticks, flung it down and call'd for death, but when he came, own'd no other occaſion for him, but to be helpt up again with his bundle. I dare in this appeal to the experience of thoſe, who have ſeem'd very weary of life, whether when any ſuddain danger has ſurpriſed them, it has not as ſuddainly altered their mind, and made

made them more desire life, then before they abhor'd it. 'Tis the common saying, As long as there is life there is hope: there is so as to secular concerns, for what strange revolutions do we often see in the age of a man? From what despicable beginnings have many arriv'd to the most splendid conditions? Of which we have divers modern as well as ancient instances. And indeed 'tis admirable to see what time and industry will (with Gods blessing) effect. *But there is no work, nor device, nor knowledg, nor wisdom in the grave.* Ecc. 9. 10. we can improve no more when we are once transplanted thither.

3. But this is yet much more considerable in respect of our spiritual state. Our life is *the day wherein we are to work*, Joh. 9. 4. (yea to work out our salvation:) but *when the night comes* (when death overtakes) *no man can work.* Now alas when 'tis consider'd how much of this day the most of us have loiter'd away, how many of us have stood idle till the sixth or ninth hour, it will be our concern not to have our day close before the eleventh. Nay alas 'tis yet worse with us: we have not been idle, but very often ill busied; so that we have a great part of our time to unravel, and that is not to be don in a moment. For tho our works may fitly enough be represented by the Prophets comparison of a *spiders web*, Isa. 59. 5. yet they want the best property even of that; they cannot be so soon undon. Vices that are radicated by time and custom, lie too deep to be lightly swept away. 'Tis no easy thing to perswade our selves to the will of parting with them. Many violences we must offer to our selves, a long and strict course of mortification must be gon thro, ere we can find in our hearts to bid them be gon: and yet when we do so, they are not so tractable as the Centurions servants. They will indeed come whenever we bid them, but they will scarce go so: they must be expell'd by force and slow degrees; we must fight for every inch of ground we gain from them: and as God would not assist the *Israelites* to subdue the *Canaanites* at once, Deut. 7. 22. so neither ordinarily do's he us to master perfectly our corruption. Now a process of this difficulty is not to be dispacht on a sudden. And yet this is not all our task, for we have not only ill habits to extirpate, but we have also good ones to acquire: 'tis not a mere negative vertue will serve our turns, nor will emty lamps enter us into the marriage chamber, Mat. 25. 10. *We must add to our faith vertue, and to vertue knowledg, and to knowledg temperance*, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 5. No link must be wanting of that sacred chain, but we must (as the same Apostle advises) *be holy in all manner of conversation.* 1 Pet. 1. 15.

And is the worst disposal of time.

4. And now I would desire the reader seriously to consider, whether he can upon good grounds tell himself that this so difficult (and yet so necessary a work is effectnally wrought in him. If it be, he is a happy man, and can with no pretence complain of any external want: (he that is fed with *Manna*, must be strangely perverse if he murmur for a belly-full of *leeks and onions.* Num. 11. 5.) But on the contrary he owes infinite thanks to God, that has spared him time for this important business, and did not put a period to his natural life, before he had begun a spiritual. For I fear there are among the best of us few of so entire an innocence, but they may remember some, either habits or acts of sin, in which it would have bin dreadful for them to have been snatcht away. And then how comprehensive, how prolific a mercy has life bin to them, when it has carried eternity in its womb, and their continuance on earth has qualified them for heaven? Neither are such persons only to look on it as a blessing in the retrospect, as it relates to the past, but also in the present and future: which

If eternity be secur'd, men may have leisure to regret the want o' temporal goods, but would be strangely unreasonable to complain who had happily secur'd that greatest interest.

if they continue to employ well, do's not only confirm, but advance their reward. Beſides God may pleaſe by them to glorify himſelf, make them inſtrumental to his ſervice; which as it is the greateſt honor, ſo it is alſo the greateſt ſatisfaction to a good heart. He ſhews himſelf too mercenary that ſo longs for his reward, as to grow impatient of his attendances: he that loves God, thinks himſelf bleſt in the opportunity of doing work, as well as in receiving wages. Thus we ſee how life is under all theſe aſpects a mercy to a pious man, and ſuch as not only obliges him to contentment, but gratitude.

If they cannot give this comfortable account of life, they ought not to complain it being their fault: and the worſe their ſtate is, the greater is the mercy of forbearance.

5. But ſuppoſing a man cannot give this comfortable account of his life, but is conſcious that he has ſpent it to a very different purpoſe, yet do's not that at all leſſen his obligations to God, who meant he ſhould have emploi'd it better, and that he has not don ſo is merely his own fault. Nay indeed the worſe his ſtate is, the greater mercy it is, that God has not yet made it irreverſible, that he has not cut him of at once from the earth and the poſſibility of heaven too, but affords him yet a longer *day*, *if* yet *he will hear his voice*, Pſal.95.7. This long-ſuffering is one of the moſt tranſcendent acts of divine goodneſs, and therefore the Apoſtle rightly ſtiles it *the riches of his goodneſs and long-ſuffering and forbearance*, Rom.2.4. and ſo at laſt we commonly acknowledg it, when we have worn it out, and can no longer receive advantage by it. What a value do's a gaſping deſpairing ſoul put upon a ſmall parcel of that time, which before he knew not how faſt enough to ſquander? O that men would ſet the ſame eſtimate on it before, and then certainly, as it would make them better husbands of it, ſo it would alſo render them more thankful for it, *Accounting that the long-ſuffering of our Lord is Salvation*, 2 Pet. 3. 15.

The benefit of life upon this ſcore, that it affords the means of repentance is ineſtimable.

6. Indeed did men but rightly compute the benefit of life upon this ſcore, all ſecular encumbrances and uneaſineſſes of it would be overwhelmed, and ſtand only as Cyphers in the account. What a ſhame is it then that we ſhould ſpend our breath in ſighs and out-cries? which if we would employ to thoſe nobler ends for which 'twas given, would ſuperſede our complaints, and make us confeſs we were well dealt with, that *our life* (tho bare and ſtript of all outward acceſſaries) *is given us for a prey.* Jer.45.5. And indeed he that has yet the great work of life to do, can very ill ſpare time or ſorrow to beſtow upon the regretting any temporal diſtreſs, ſince his whole ſtock is little enough to bewail and repair his neglects of his eternal concerns. Were all our lives therefore deſtitute of all outward comfort, nay were they nothing but a ſcene of perpetual diſaſters, yet this one advantage of life would infinitly outweigh them all, and render our murmurings very inexcuſable.

Life involves ſeveral great temporal mercies.

7. But God has not put this to the utmoſt trial, has never plac'd any man in ſuch a ſtate of unmixt calamity, but that he ſtill affords many and great allaies: he finds it fit ſomtimes to defalk ſome of our outward comforts, and perhaps imbitter others, but he never takes all away. This muſt be acknowleg'd, if we do but conſider how many things there are in which the whole race of mankind do in common partake. The four Elements, fire and water, air and earth, do not more make up every mans compoſition, then they ſupply his needs: the whole hoſt of heaven, the Sun, Moon and Stars, *Moſes* will tell us, are by *God divided to all nations under the whole Heaven*, Deut.4.19. Thoſe reſplendent bodies equally afford their light and influence to all. The ſun ſhines as bright on the poor Cottage, as on the moſt magnificent Palace; and the Stars have their benign Aſpects, as well for him, that *is behind the Mill*, as for *him that ſitteth on the*

on the Throne, Exod. 11. 5. Propriety (that great incendiary below) breeds no confusion in those celestial Orbs, but they are every mans treasure, yet no mans peculiar (as if they meant to teach us, that our love of appropriation *descends not from above*, Jam. 3. 15. is no heavenly quality.)

8. And as they make no distinction of the ranks and degrees of men, so neither do they of their vertues. Our Savior tells us, God causes *his Sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*, Matt. 5. 45. If now we descend lower to the sublunary creatures, they equally pay their homage to man, do not disdain the dominion of the poor, and submit to that of the rich, but shew us that that their instinct extends to the whole nature. An horse draws the poor mans plough, as tamely as the Princes chariot, and the beggars hungry Cur follows him with as much obsequiousness and affection as the pamper'd lap-dogs of the nicest Ladies. The sheep obey a poor mercenary shepherd as well as they did the Daughters of the wealthy *Laban*, Gen. 29. 9. or of *Jethro* a Prince, Exod. 2. 16. and as willingly yield their fleece to clothe *Lazarus*, as to make purple for *Dives*. And as animals, so vegetables are as communicative of their qualities to one man as another. The corn nurishes, the fruits refresh, the flowers delight, the simples cure the poor man as well as the rich. *Which without restraint are given to all.*

9. But I foresee it will be objected, that these natural privileges are insignificant, because they are evacuated by those positive laws which bound propriety, & that therefore tho one man could use the creatures as well as another, yet every man has them not to use. I answer, that for some of the things I have mention'd, they are still in their native latitude, cannot be inclosed or monopoliz'd. The most ravenous oppressor could never yet lock up the sun in his chest: *he that laies house to house, and land to land, till there be no place*, Esa. 5. 8. cannot inclose the common air: and the like may be said of divers of the rest, so that there are some (and those no mean) blessings, which continue still the indefeisible right of mankind in general. *And of which there are some that can not be enclos'd.*

10. As for those other things which are liable to the restrictive terms of *meum* and *tuum*, 'tis not to be deni'd but there is vast difference in the dispensing them; as great as *Nathans* parable describes, when he speaks of the numerous flocks of the rich man, and the *single ewe lamb of the poor*, 2 Sam. 12. 2. yet there is scarce any so deplorably indigent, but that by one means or other, he has or may have the necessary supports of life. Perhaps they fall not into his lap by birth-right and inheritance, yet they are acquirable by labor and industry, which is perhaps the better tenure. They cannot it may be arrive to *Sodoms fulness of bread:* yet if they have not her *abundance of Idleness*, Ez. 16. 49. they commonly need not want that, which was the height of *Agurs* wish, *food convenient*, Prov. 30. 8. 'Tis true indeed, if they will fold their hands in their bosom, if with *Solomon's sluggard, they will not plough by reason of the cold*, they must take his fate in the summer, as they have his ease in the winter, *they may beg in harvest, and have nothing*, Prov. 20. 4. but then 'tis visible they are the Authors of their own necessities. And indeed to men of such lazy careless natures, 'tis hard to say, what degree of Gods bounty can keep them from want, since we often see the fairest fortunes dissipated as well by the supine negligence, as the riotous prodigality of owners. And therefore if men will be idle, they are not to accuse God, but themselves if they be indigent. *And those that admit of restriction by propriety, are yet acquirable by labor.*

11. But then there is one case wherein men seem more inevitably expos'd, and that is when by age, sickness, or decrepitness, they are disabled from work; or when their family is too numerous for their work to maintain. *Even the most forlorn conditions of sickness and age, have suitable reliefs assign'd to them.*

And this indeed ſeems the moſt forlorn ſtate of poverty: yet God has provided for them alſo, by aſſigning ſuch perſons to the care of the rich; nay he has put an extraordinary mark of favor on them, given them the honor of being his proxies and repreſentatives, made them letters of Attorny (as it were) to demand relief in his name, and upon his account. And tho 'tis too true, that even that Autority will not prevail with many of the rich to open their purſes, yet even in this Age of frozen charity, there are ſtill ſome who remember upon what terms they received their wealth, and employ it accordingly. And tho the number of them is not ſo great as were to be wiſht, yet there are in all parts ſome ſcattered here and there like *Cities of refuge* in the Land, Deut. 19. 2. to which theſe poor diſtreſſed creatures may flee for ſuccor. And I think I may ſay, that between the legal proviſions that are made in this caſe and voluntary contributions, there are not very many that want the things that are of abſolute neceſſity: and we know St. *Paul* comprizes thoſe in a ſmall compaſs, *food and raiment*, and propoſes them as ſufficient materials of Content. 1 Tim. 6. 8. I ſay not this to contract any mans bowels, or leſſen his compaſſions to ſuch poor wretches. For how much ſoever they lend, I wiſh as *Joab* did in another caſe to *David*, the Lord *increaſe it a hundredfold*, 2 Sam. 24. 3. I only urge it as an evidence of the aſſertion I am to prove, that no man is ſo pretermitted by God or his diſpoſal of temporals, but that even he that ſeems the moſt abandon'd has a ſhare in his providence, and conſequently cannot juſtly murmur, ſince even this ſtate which is the higheſt inſtance of human indigence, is not without its receits from God.

The number of utterly forlorn perſons is very ſmall.

12. But the number in this form are but few, compar'd to thoſe in a higher: for between this and the higheſt affluence, how many intermedial degrees are there, in which men partake not only of the neceſſaries, but comforts of life; that have not only food and raiment, but their diſtinction of holy-day and working-day fare and apparel? He that is but one ſtep advanced from beggary has ſo much, he that has got to a ſecond has more then is neceſſary: and ſo every degree riſes in plenty till it comes to vanity and exceſs. And even there too there are gradual riſings, ſome having ſo much fewel for luxury, that they are at as great a loſs for invention, as others can be for materials, and complain that there are no farther riots left for them to eſſay. How many are there who have ſo cloy'd and glutted their ſenſes, that they want ſome other inlets for pleſure, and with the rich man in the Goſpel, are in diſtreſs where to beſtow their abundance?

That deſtitution is not the ground of diſcontent, is manifeſt for that they moſt repine who have the greateſt affluence.

13. And ſure ſuch as theſe cannot deny that they have receiv'd good things, yet generally there are none leſs contented; which is a clear demonſtration, that our repinings proceed not from any defect of bounty in God, but from the malignant temper of our own hearts. And as it is an eaſier thing to ſatisfy the cravings of an hungry, then to cure the nauſeous recoilings of a ſurfeited ſtomach; ſo certainly the diſcontents of the poor, are much eaſier allai'd then thoſe of the rich: the indigence of the one has contracted his deſires, and has taught him not to look farther then a little beyond bare neceſſaries, ſo that a moderate Alms ſatisfies, and a liberal tranſports him: but he who by a perpetual repletion has his deſires ſtretcht and extended, is capable of no ſuch ſatisfaction: when his enjoiments fore-ſtall all particular purſuits, and he knows not upon what to faſten his next wiſh; yet even then he has ſome confus'd unform'd appetites, and thinks himſelf miſerable, becauſe he cannot tell what would make him more happy. And yet this is that envi'd ſtate which men with

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ſo much greedineſs aſpire to: every man looks on it as the top of felicity to have nothing more to wiſh in the world. And yet alas even that when attain'd, would be their torment. Let men never think then that Contentment is to be caught by long and forreign chaſes; he is likelieſt to find it who ſits at home, and duly contemplates thoſe bleſſings which God has brought within his reach, of which every man has a fair proportion, if he will advert to it.

14. For beſides theſe external acceſſions (of which the meaneſt have ſome, the middle ſort a great deal, and the uppermoſt rather too much) man is a principality within himſelf, and has in his compoſure ſo many excellent impreſſes of his Makers power and goodneſs, that he need not ask leave of any exterior thing to be happy, if he know but aright how to value himſelf. The very meaneſt part of him, his body is a piece of admirable workmanſhip, of a moſt incomprehenſible contrivance, as the Pſalmiſt ſaies, *He is fearfully and wonderfuily made*; and 'tis aſtoniſhing to think of what a ſymmetry of parts this beautiful fabrick is made up. Nor are they only for ſhew, but uſe: every member, every limb is endowed with a particular faculty to render it ſerviceable to the whole; and ſo admirable is the contexture of veins and arteries, ſinues and muſcles, nerves and tendons, that none are ſuperfluous, but ſome way or other contribute to vegitation, ſenſe, or motion. Nay the moſt noble and moſt uſeful parts are all of them double, not only as a reſerve in caſe of miſadventure of one part; but alſo as an inſtance of the bounty of the Donor. And indeed it is obſervable of *Galen* in his writings, that after he had taken great care to exemt himſelf and all of his profeſſion from taking notice of the Deity, by ſaying that to diſcourſe concerning the Gods, was the task of ſpeculative Philoſophers; yet coming to write *de uſu partium*, and conſidering the frame of human bodies, and therein diſcovering the wonderful contrivance of every part in reference to its ſelf, and alſo to the whole; their ſtrength, agility, and various movement, infinitly ſurpaſſing the powers of all Mechanic engines; he ſeems to have had the fate we read of *Saul* in holy Scripture, and againſt his genius and purpoſe to become a Prophet; breaking frequently out into Hymns and ſacred raptures; ſaying, theſe Myſteries are more divine then the *Samothracian* or *Eleuſinian*; and confeſſing they both ſtrictly require and infinitly excell the low returns of human praiſe. But beyond the fabric of parts as organic, what an extract of wonder are our ſenſes, thoſe *five operations of the Lord*, as the ſon of *Syrach* rightly (and by way of eminence) ſtiles them, Ecclus. 17. 5? By theſe we draw all outward objects to our ſelves. What were the beauties of the univerſe to us, if we had not ſight to behold them, or the moſt melodious ſounds, if we had not hearing? and ſo of the reſt. And yet theſe are not only generally given, but alſo preſerv'd to the greater part of men: and perhaps would be to more, did not our baſe undervaluing of common mercies, force God ſometimes to inſtruct us in their worth, by making us feel what it is to want them.

Every man is a principality within himſelf.

15. Multitude of refreſhments alſo God has provided for our bodies, particularly that of ſleep, of which he has bin ſo conſiderate, as in his diſtributions of time, to make a ſolemn allotment for it: yet who almoſt when he lies down conſiders the mercy, or when he riſes refreſht, riſes thankfull alſo? But if our reſt at any time be interrupted by the cares of our mind, or pains of our bodies, then, (and not till then) we conſider, that 'tis *God who gives his beloved ſleep*, Pſal. 127. 2. and think it a bleſſing worth our eſteem. Thus it is with health, ſtrength, and every thing elſe,

The refreſhment of theſe is a mercy of great value.

elſe, we deſpiſe it whilſt we have it, and impatiently deſire it whileſt we have it not; but in the interim ſure we cannot complain, that Gods hand is ſhortned towards us, when in the ordinary courſe of his providence we commonly enjoy theſe mercies many years, which we find ſo much miſs of; if they be withdrawn but for a few hours. And indeed there is not a greater inſtance of human pravity then our ſenſeleſs contemt of bleſſings, merely becauſe they are cuſtomary; which in true reaſon is an argument why we ſhould prize them the more. When we deal with men, we diſcern it well enough: he that gives me once a hundred pounds, I account not ſo much my benefactor, as if he made it my annual revenue; yet God muſt loſe his thanks, by multiplying his favors; and his benefits grow more inviſible by their being alwaies before us.

Our intellectual powers are infinitly more valuable, then thoſe of the body.

16. But the body (with its enjoiment) is but the loweſt inſtance of Gods bounty: 'tis but a decent caſe for that ineſtimable Jewel he has put in it: the ſoul, like the Ark, is the thing for which this whole tabernacle was framed, and that is a ſpark of Divinity in which alone it is that God accompliſhed his deſign of *making man in his own image*, Gen. 1. 26. 'Twould be too long to attemt an exact ſurvey of its particular excellences; the mere intellectual powers wherewith it is indued, have exerciſed the curioſity and raiſed the admiration of the great contemplators of nature in all ages: yet after all, of ſo ſubtle compoſure is the ſoul, that it is inſcrutable even to it ſelf: and tho the ſimpleſt man knows he has the faculties of Imagination, Apprehenſion, Memory, Reflecting; yet the learnedſt cannot aſſign where they are ſeated, or by what means they operate. 'Tis enough to us that we have them, and many excellent uſes for them; one whereof (and a moſt neceſſary one) is a thankful reflexion on the goodneſs of God who gave them. He might have made us in the very loweſt form of creatures, inſenſible as ſtocks or ſtones; or if he had advanc'd us a ſtep higher, he might have fixt us among mere animals, tranſcripts perhaps of the noxious, at the beſt of the tamer ſort of beaſts: but he has plac'd us in the higheſt rank of viſible creatures, and not only given *Dominion over the works of his hands*, Pſal. 8. 6. but has given us the uſe of reaſon wherewith to manage that ſoveraignty, without which we had only bin the more maſterful ſort of brutes.

Yet the ſoul it ſelf is a higher donation.

17. Yet ſtill the ſoul is to be conſider'd in a higher notion, that of its immortality and capacity of endleſs bliſs. And here indeed it owns its extraction, and is an image of the firſt being, whoſe felicity is coexiſtent with himſelf. This as it is the moſt tranſcendent accompliſhment of our nature, ſo it is moſt univerſal. Whatever diſparity there may be between man and man in other reſpects, yet in this all are equal: the poor beggar at the gate has a ſoul as capacious of eternal happineſs, as he whoſe *crumbs* he begs for (nay ſomtimes better prepar'd for it, as that parable ſhews, *Luke* 16. 21.) And tho the dignities of earth are the prize of the rich and noble, the ſubtle and deſigning; yet Heaven is as eaſily mounted from the dung-hil as the throne, and an honeſt ſimplicity will ſooner bring us thither, then all the Machiavelian policy. Nay God has not only deſign'd us to ſo glorious an end, but has don all on his part to ſecure us of it, ſent his Son to lead us the way, his ſpirit to quicken us in it. We need not diſpute how univerſal this is, 'tis ſure it concerns all to whom I am now ſpeaking, thoſe that are within the pale of the Church: and if it ſhould prove confin'd only to them, the more peculiar is their obligation, that are thus ſingled out from the reſt of the world, and the greater ought to be their thankfulneſs. The heathen Philoſopher made it matter of his

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ſolemn acknowledgment to fortune, that he was born a Grecian and not a Barbarian: and ſure the advantages of our Chriſtianity are of a much higher ſtrein, and ought to be infinitly more celebrated. The Apoſtle we find often applauding this glorious privilege, as that which makes us *fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God*, Epheſ. 3. 19. nay which elevates us to a higher ſtate, *the adoption of ſons*, Gal. 4. 5. nor only Sons, but *Heirs alſo of God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17. And what ambition is there ſo greedy which this will not ſatisfy? yet this is our common ſtate, the birth-right of our regeneration, if we do not degrade our ſelves, and with *Eſau* baſely ſell our title.

18. And now methinks every man may interrogate himſelf in the ſame form, wherein *Jonadab* did *Amnon*, 2 Sam. 13. 4. *why art thou, being the Kings ſon, thus lean from day to day?* Why ſhould a Perſon who is adopted by the King of Kings, thus languiſh and pine? What is there below the ſun worthy his notice, much leſs his deſires, that hath a Kingdom above it? Certainly did we but know how to eſtimate our ſelves upon this account, twere impoſſible for us with ſuch ſordid condeſcenſions to court every petty worldly intereſt, and ſo impatiently vex our ſelves when we cannot attain it. Alas how unworthily do we bear the name of Chriſtians, when that which carried the Forefathers of our Faith thro the moſt fiery trials, cannot ſupport us under the diſappointment of any extravagant deſire? They had ſuch *reſpect to the recompence of the reward*, Heb. 11. 26. as made them chearfully expoſe their Fame to ignominy, their Goods to rapine, their Bodies to the moſt exquiſite tortures, and their Lives to death. Yet the ſame hopes cannot work us to any tolerable degree of patience, when we ſuffer but the ſmalleſt diminution in any of theſe. What ſhall we ſay? Is Heaven grown leſs valuable, or Earth more then it was then? No ſurely, but we are more infatuated in our eſtimates: we have ſo long abetted the rivalry of the hand-maid, that the Miſtreſs, like *Sarah*, appears deſpicable. Like *Jonah* we ſit down ſullen upon the withering of a gourd, never conſidering that God has provided us a better ſhelter, *a building of God eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. Indeed there can be no temporal deſtitution ſo great, which ſuch an expectation cannot make ſupportable. Were we in *Jobs* condition ſitting upon a dunghil, and ſcraping our ſelves with a potſheard, yet as long as we can ſay with him, *our redeemer liveth*, Job. 19. 25. we have all reaſon to ſay with him alſo, *bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* Chap. 1. 21. What a madneſs is it then for us to expoſe our ſelves to be pierc'd and wounded by every temporal adverſity, who have ſo impenetrable an armour? Nay what an ungrateful contumely is it to that goodneſs of God, to ſhew that we cannot make him a counterpoiſe to the moſt trivial ſecular ſatisfaction? On which account ſure he may again take up that exprobrating complaint we find in the Prophet, *A goodly price, that I was valued at by them.* Zac. 11. 13.

'Tis moſt ungratefull for a ſoul born to immortality to complain.

19. But how mean ſoever he is in our eies, tho *Chriſt* ſeem the ſame to us in his glory which he did in his abjection, to have no beauty that we ſhould deſire him; yet he puts another rate upon himſelf, and tell us, *He that loves Father or Mother, Son or Daughter more then me, is not worthy of me*, Matt. 10. 37. Now our love and our joy are paſſions coincident, and therefore whatever we joy more in then we do in him, we may be preſum'd to love better; and if he cannot endure the competition of thoſe more ingenuous objects of our love he there mentions, how will he ſuffer that of our vanities, our childiſh wanton appetites? And yet thoſe are the things after which we ſo impatiently rave. For I believe I may truly affirm,

Eſpecially a ſoul redeem'd.

affirm, that if there were a ſcrutiny made into all the diſcontents of mankind, for one that were faſtned upon any great conſiderable calamity, there are many that are founded only in the irregularity of our own deſires.

Nothing but want of application of mind, could occaſion our complaints.

20. By what has bin ſaid we may juſtly conclude in the Prophets Phraſe, *God hath not bin to us a wilderneſs, a land of darkneſs*, Jer. 2.31. but has graciouſly diſpenc'd to us in all our intereſts. Yet the inſtances here given are only common, ſuch as relate to all, or at leaſt the far greater part of mankind: but what volumes might be made, ſhould every man ſet down his own particular experiences of mercy? In that caſe 'twould be no extravagant Hyperbole we find Joh. 22.25. *That even the world it ſelf could not contain the books which ſhould be written.* God knows our memories are very frail, and our obſervations ſlight in this point: yet abſtracting from all the forgotten or neglected favors, what vaſt catalogues may every man make to himſelf, if he would but yet recollect, what effects he has had of Gods bounty in giving, of his providence in protecting, of his grace in reſtraining and exciting, of his patience in forbearing? And certainly all theſe productions of the divine goodneſs were never deſign'd to die in the birth. The Pſalmiſt will tell us, *the Lord hath ſo don his marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance.* Pſ. 111.4. Let very man then make it his daily care to recount to himſelf the wonders God hath don, as for the children of men in general, ſo for himſelf in particular. When the *Iſraelites* murmured under their bondage, *Pharaoh* imputes it to their idlenes, and preſcribes them more work, as the readieſt cure: a piece indeed of inhuman Tyranny in him, but may with equity and ſucceſs be practiced by us upon our ſelves. When we find our appetites mutinous, complaining of our preſent condition, let us ſet our ſelves to work, impoſe it as a task upon our ſelves to recollect the many inſtances of Gods mercies. And ſurely if we do it ſincerely, and with intention, we cannot have paſt thro half our ſtages, before our ſullen murmurs will be beat out of countenance, and retire with ſhame, when they are confronted with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, ſuch ſignal teſtimonies of Gods goodneſs to us: for when we muſter'd up all our little grievances, moſt critically examin'd all our wants, we ſhall find them very unproportionable to our comforts, and to our receits; in which comparative notion, the next Section is to conſider them.

SECT. IV.

Of the Surpluſage of our Enjoiments above our Sufferings.

Our poſſeſſions may be eſtimated by their number, weight or continuance.

1. TO regulate our eſtimate of thoſe things which we either enjoy or ſuffer, there are three precedent queries to be made: the firſt of their number or plenty; the ſecond of their weight, the third of their conſtancy and continuance; for according as they partake more of theſe properties, every good is more good, and every evil is more evil. It will therefore be our beſt method of trial in the preſent caſe, to compare our bleſſings and our calamities in the three reſpects.

Our bleſſings are in number infinite.

2. And firſt in that of plenty. The mercies of God are the ſource of all our good, are ſet out to us in holy Scripture in the moſt *ſuperlative* ſtrein, they are *multitudes*, Pſ. 102.20. *Plenteous redemtion*, Pſal. 130.7. *as high as the heaven*, Pſal. 103.11. *He fills all things living with plenteouſneſs*, Pſal. 145.16. His mercies indeed are ſuch as come not within the compaſs of number, but

but ſtretch themſelves to infinity, and are beſt repreſented by ſuch a calculation as God made to *Abraham*, when he ſhew'd the numerouſneſs of his poſterity by the innumerableneſs of the ſtars, *Gen.* 15. 5. Were there but a ſingle mercy apportion'd to each minute of our lives, the ſum would ariſe very high: but how is our Arithmetic confounded, when every minute has more then we can diſtinctly number? For beſides the original ſtock mention'd in the laſt Section, and the acceſſion of new bounty, the giving us ſomwhat which we had not before; what an accumulative mercy is it, the preſerving what we have? We are made up of ſo many pieces, have ſuch varities of intereſts, ſpiritual, temporal, public, and private; for our ſelves, for our friends, and dependents; that it is not a confuſed general regard that will keep all in ſecurity one moment. We are like a vaſt building, which coſts as much to maintain, as to erect. And indeed conſidering the corruptibleneſs of our materials, our preſervation is no leſs a work of Omnipotence, then our firſt forming: nay perhaps 'tis rather a greater. Our original clay tho it had no aptneſs, yet it had no averſions to the receiving a human form; but was in the hand of the potter to make it what he pleaſed: but we now have principles of decay within us, which vehemently tend to diſſolution; we want the ſupplies of ſeveral things without us, the failing whereof returns us again to our duſt. Nay we do not only need the aid, but we fear the hoſtility of outward things. That very air which ſomtimes refreſhes us, may at another ſtarve and freeze us: that which warms and comforts us, has alſo a power of conſuming us. Yea that very meat which nuriſhes, may choak and ſtifle us. In a word there is no creature ſo deſpicable, ſo inconſiderable, which may not ſomtimes ſerve us, & which may not at any time (if God permit) ruine us. Now whence is it that we ſo conſtantly, ſo frequently find the good, the benign efficacy of theſe things, and ſo ſeldom, ſo rarely the evil? Whence I ſay is it, but from the active unwearied providence, which draws forth the better properties of the creatures for our uſe, and reſtrains the worſer for our ſecurity? which with a particular advertence watches not only over every Perſon, but over every ſeveral concern of that perſon. And how aſtoniſhing a contemplation is this? If the mere ebbing and flowing of the ſea, put the Philoſopher into ſuch an extaſy, that he flung himſelf into it, becauſe he could not comprehend the inſcrutable cauſe of it; in what perpetual raptures of admiration may we be, who have every minute within us, and about us, more and greater wonders, and thoſe too in our favor, when we deſerve rather the Divine power ſhould exert it ſelf in our deſtruction?

3. But alas our danger from the viſible creatures, is little compar'd with thoſe from the ſpirits of darkneſs. *We wreſtle not only with fleſh and blood, but with Principalities and Powers, with ſpiritual wickedneſs*, &c. Eph. 6. 12. So inveterate is the enmity between the *Serpent* and the *ſeed* of the *Woman* in general, that he watches all advantages againſt us, not only in our ſouls, but even our bodies, our goods, and in every part of our concerns. Thus we ſee he not only aſſaulted *Jobs* ſoul by the wicked inſinuations of his Wife, but (with more effect) his body with boiles and ſores, his poſſeſſions by the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, and the images of himſelf, his deareſt Children, by a wind from the wilderneſs, Job 1. And can we think his malice is now worn out? No ſurely he ſtill wiſhes as ill to mankind as ever, and we ſhould ſoon ſee the woful effects of it, did not the ſame power which let him looſe for *Jobs* trial, reſtrain him for our ſafety. Nay had he but power to affright, tho not to hurt us, even that would make

Our miſadventures much fewer.

our live very uncomfortable. We cannot hear the relation of Sprights or apparitions, but our blood chills upon it, and a horror runs thro our veins: what ſhould we then do if he ſhould make his neight-walks thro our chambers, and with his illuſory terrors diſturb our reſt? Yet all this and much more he would do, if God did not chain up this *old Dragon*, Rev.20. Nay if he were not at the expence of a guard about us, and thoſe no leſs then Angels. I ſhall not diſpute whither every perſon hath not his peculiar Guardian: for tho many have not improbably aſſerted it, we have ground enough of acquieſcence in the general affirmation of the Apoſtle, *that they are all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 4. And now if the Reader pleaſe to ſum up how many are his concerns, and how many are the dangers which await him in them all, he cannot ſure render the account of thoſe mercies which preſerve the one, and divert the other, in any other Phraſe then that of the Pſalmiſt. *They are more then I am able to expreſs.* Pſal. 40. 7.

The querulous cannot produce ſo many cauſes of complaint as they may of thanksgiving.

4. We may now challenge the moſt miſerable, or the moſt querulous man living, to produce cauſes of complaint, proportionable to thoſe of thanksgiving. He that has the greateſt ſtock of calamities, can never vye with the heaps of benefits; the diſproportion is greater then that of the armies of *Ahab* and *Benhadad*. 1 Kings 20. 27. whereof the one was like *two little flocks of Kids, the other filled the country.* God has told us that he *afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men.* Lam.3.33. whereas on the contrary, he *delighted in mercy.* Mich.7. 18. We may judge by our ſelves which he is the likelieſt often to repete, thoſe acts which he doth with regret and reluctancy, or thoſe which he do's with pleſure and delight. But we need no inferences where we have the atteſtation of expeperience. Let every man therefore make this his judge in the caſe, let him every night recollect, how many things within and about him he is concern'd in, and conſider how many of thoſe have bin preſerv'd intire to him, ſtill accounting every thing ſo continued as a new donation. If he begin with his Spiritual ſtate, 'tis too poſſible he may ſomtimes find he has loſt his innocence, committed ſome, perhaps many ſins: but even in theſe he will find cauſe to juſtify God, if he do but recollect with what inward checks and admonitions, and outward reſtraints, God has endevored to bridle him. If he will break thro thoſe fences, that do's not at all derogate from the mercy of God which ſo guarded him, but it rather illuſtrates his goodneſs, that after ſo many quenchings of his Spirit, do's yet continue its influence. So that even he that has the moſt deplorably violated his integrity, is yet to confeſs that Gods purpoſe was to have perſerv'd it intire: and he might really ſo have kept it, had he compli'd with thoſe aids which were afforded him. But in temporal concerns we are not ſo apt to undermine our ſelves, and therefore ſhall more rarely find we have ſuffer'd detriment in them, then in our ſpiritual; but are there ordinarily like to meet with a better account. Let a man therefore conſider what is lacking to him of all the ſecular good things he had in the morning, and tell me whither for the moſt part he may not give ſuch an account, as the *Iſraelitiſh* officers did of their men after the ſlaughter of *Midianites*, *that he had not loſt one.* Num. 31. 30. Or if ſomtimes he do ſuffer a diminution, yet at the worſt he will find that many more good things have bin preſerv'd to him, then have bin taken from him. A man may perhaps meet with ſome damage in his eſtate, yet 'tis manifold odds that that damage is but partial, and that he has ſtill more left then is loſt. Or if it be more intire; yet if he have his health, his limbs, his ſenſes, his friends,

friends, and all things beſide his eſtate left him, ſo that for one thing he has loſt, he ſtill retains a multitude, he may ſay of it as the Diſciples of the few Loaves, *what is this among ſo many*? Mat. 14. 17. *Ariſtippus* being bemoan'd for the loſs of a Farm, repli'd with ſome ſharpneſs upon his Condoler, you have but one field, and I have yet three left, why ſhould I not rather grieve for you? intimating that a man is not ſo much to eſtimate what he has loſt, as what he has left. A piece of wiſdom which if we would tranſcribe we might quickly convince our ſelves, that even in our moſt adverſe eſtate there are as *Elijah* ſpeaks, *more with us then againſt us*, 2 Kin. 6. 16. that our enjoiments are more then our ſufferings, and Gods acts of grace, do far out-number thoſe of his ſeverity.

Our bleſſings are weighty as well as numerous.

5. And as they do out-number, ſo alſo do they out-weigh them. The mercies we receive from God are (as the laſt Section has ſhew'd) of the greateſt importance; the moſt ſubſtantial ſolid goods, and the greateſt of all, I mean thoſe which concern our eternal ſtate, are ſo firmly fixt on us, that unleſs we will voluntarily quit our clame, 'tis not in the power of men or devils to defeat us. Light bodies are eaſily blown away by every guſt of wind, but this *weight of glory*, as the Apoſtle calls it, 2 Cor. 4. 17. continues firm and ſtable, is proof againſt all ſtorms, like the *ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*. Iſa. 32. 2. Thoſe dark adumbrations we have of it, might have ſerved to refreſh and deceive the tediouſneſs of our pilgrimage, and therefore the moſt formidable calamities of this life are below all meſures of compariſon with this hope of our calling, this *riches of the glory of our inheritance*. Eph. 3. 16. The heavieſt and moſt preſſing of our afflictions are to that, *but like the ſmall duſt of the ballance*, Eſa. 40. 15. ſo that if we ſhould here ſtop our inquiſition, we have a ſufficient reſolution of the preſent queſtion, and muſt conclude that God has given us an abundant counterpoiſe of all, we either do or can ſuffer here.

The denial of temporal good things is a proof of an intereſt in ſpiritual: and even the moſt calamitous have many great bleſſings.

6. If therefore there be any ſo forlorn as to temporals, that he can fetch thence no evidence of Gods fatherly care of him, yet this one conſideration may ſolve his doubts, and convince him that he is not abdicated by him. We read of no *gifts Abraham* gave *Iſaac*, yet to the ſons of the concubins 'tis ſaid he did, Gen. 25. 6. It had bin a very fallacious inference, if *Iſaac* ſhould have concluded himſelf neglected, becauſe his far greater portion was but in reverſions. And it will be the ſame in any of us, if we argue an unkindneſs from any temporal wants who have the entail of an eternal inheritance. But ſurely *God do's not leave himſelf without a witneſs*, Act. 14. 17. even in ſecular things; there is no man breathing but has ſome bleſſings of his left hand, as well as his right, as I have already mention'd: and unleſs it be ſome few prodigies of Calamity in whoſe puniſhment or patience God deſigns ſignally to glorify himſelf, there are none who enjoy not greater comforts of life then thoſe they want, I mean ſuch as are really greater, tho perhaps, to their prejudicated fancies they do not appear ſo. Thus in point of health, if a man be diſaffected in one part, yet all the reſt of his body may be (and often is) well; or if he have a complication, and have more then one diſeaſe, yet there is no man that has all, or half ſo many as are incident to human bodies; ſo that he is comparatively more healthy then ſick. So again it is not very common for a man to loſe a limb, or ſenſe, the generality of men keep them to their laſt; and they who do, have in that an overbalance to moſt outward adverſities; and even they who are ſo unhappy to loſe one, yet commonly keep the reſt; at leaſt the major part: or if at any time any

man is left a mere breathing trunk, yet it is by ſuch ſtupifying diſeaſes as dead the ſenſe, or ſuch mortal ones as ſoon take them away; and ſo the remedy overtakes the Malady. Beſides it pleaſes God very often, to make compenſation for the want of one member or faculty by improving the uſe of another. We have ſeen feet ſupply all the neceſſary uſes of hands to thoſe who have had none; and it is a thing of daily obſervation that men that are blind, have the greater internal light: have their intellects more vigorous and active, by their abſtractions from viſible objects.

The poor man has more real pleſures then the rich.

7. Thus alſo it is in the matter of wealth, he that is forced to get his bread by the ſweat of his brows, 'tis true he cannot have thoſe delicacies wherewith rich men abound; yet his labor helps him to a more poignant, a more ſavory ſauce then a whole College of Epicures can compound. His hunger gives a higher guſt to his dry cruſt, then the ſurfeited ſtomach can find in the moſt coſtly, moſt elaborate mixtures: ſo verifying the obſervation of *Solomon*, *the full ſoul loatheth the hony comb*, *but to the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet*, Prov. 27. 7. He cannot *indeed ſtretch himſelf upon his bed of Ivory*, Am. 6. 4. yet his ſleeps are ſounder then thoſe that can. The wiſe man tells us, and experience do's ſo too, that *the ſleep of a laboring man is ſweet*. Eccleſ. 5. 12. He is not clothed Gorgeouſly, has not the ſplendor of glittering apparel, ſo neither has he the care of contriving it, the fears of being foreſtal'd in a new invention, or any of thoſe unmanly ſolicitudes which attend that vanity. He has the proper genuine uſe of clothing; the preventing ſhame and cold, and is happily determin'd to that which the wiſer men of the world have voluntarily choſen. To conclude, he has one advantage beyond all theſe; his neceſſities reſcue him from idleneſs, and all its conſequent temtations; which is ſo great a benefit, that if rich men be not their own taskmaſters as his wants are his, if they do not provide themſelves of buſineſs; that one want of theirs is infinitly more deplorable then all his: and he is not only happy comparatively with himſelf, in having better things then he wants, but with them alſo.

Privacy is more deſirable then eminence.

8. If we come now to reputation and fame, the account will be much the ſame. He that is eminent in the world for ſome great atchievement, is ſet up as an object of every mans remark; when as his excellences on the one hand are viſible, ſo his faults and blemiſhes are on the other. And as human frailty makes it too probable theſe latter will be really more, ſo human envy makes it ſure that they ſhall be more preciſely, more curiouſly obſerved, and more loudly blazon'd. So that upon the whole, a good quiet ſecurity, tho it be not the road to glory, yet it is the likleſt fence againſt infamy. And indeed he that can keep up the repute of a ſober integrity within his own private ſphere, need not envy the triumphant ſallies of others, which often meet with a fatal turn at the later end of the day. But 'twill be ſaid that even that more moderate ſort of reputation is not every mans portion, but that many lie under great ignominy & ſcandals. I ſhall here ask whether thoſe be juſt or unjuſt: If they be juſt they belong not to our preſent ſubject, which relates only to thoſe inflictions which are the effects of Gods immediate providence, not of our own crimes; for I never doubted but that by thoſe we may diveſt our ſelves of any, nay of all the good things God has deſign'd us. But if the obloquy be unjuſt, 'tis probable that 'tis taken up only by ill men, and that the good paſs a more equitable ſentence; and then ſurely the atteſtation of a few ſuch, is able to outweigh a multitude of the others. And in this caſe a man may not only find patience but pleſure in reproches. *Socrates* lookt with trouble & jealouſy on himſelf when ill men commended him, ſaying

what

what ill have I don? and ſure a Chriſtian has a farther reaſon to be pleas'd with their revilings, they being his ſecurity againſt the *woe* pronounc'd to thoſe *whom all men ſpeak well of*, Luke 6. 26. But ſomtimes it happens, that even good men are ſeduc'd, and either by the artifices of the wicked, or their own too haſty credulity, give credit to unjuſt reports. And this I confeſs is a ſharp trial to the injur'd perſon, yet even this cannot often be univerſal; there can ſcarce be any innocence ſo forlorn but that there may be opportunities of clearing it to ſome or other, and by them propagating it to more, and if the cloud ever come to be diſpers'd, their fame will appear with the brighter luſter. But if none of this happen, they have yet a certain and more bleſſed retreat, even an appeal to the unerring Judg, who never beholds us with more approbation, than when we are under the unjuſt condemnation of men. Indeed we have then a double tie upon him, not only his juſtice, but his pity is concern'd in our cauſe. God particularly owns himſelf as the refuge of the oppreſſed, and there is ſcarce a ſharper and more ſenſible oppreſſion than this of Calumny: yet even this proves advantage, whilſt it procures God's immediate patronage, makes us the objects of his more peculiar care and compaſſion, who can *make our righteouſneſs as clear as the light*, Pſalm 37. 6. if he ſee it fit; but if in his wiſdom he chuſe not that for us, 'tis comfort enough for us that we have approv'd it to him. 'Twas *Elkanahs* queſtion to *Hannah* in her diſconſolation, *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons?* 1 Sam. 1. 8. And ſure we may ſay the like of God's approbation, that 'tis better to us, I ſay not than ten, but ten thouſand Eulogies of men. The very Echo of it in the teſtimony of a good conſcience is an unſpeakable comfort, and this voice ſounds more audibly, more ſweetly among the loudeſt, the harſheſt accuſations of men. So that we ſee even this aſſault too is not without its guard, and theſe *waters of Marah*, Exod. 15. 23. may be render'd not only wholſom, but pleaſant.

Miſadventures in point of friendſhip are counterbalanced.

9. I have now inſtanced in the three moſt general concerns of human life, the Body, Goods, and Fame, to which heads may be reduced moſt of the afflictions incident to our outward ſtate, as far as immediatly concerns our ſelves. But there is no man ſtands ſo ſingle in the world, but he has ſome relations or friends in which he thinks himſelf intereſſed, and many times thoſe oblique ſtrokes which wound us thro them, are as painful as the more direct: yet here alſo God is ordinarily pleas'd to provide ſome allaies, if we would but take notice of them. He who has had one friend die, has ordinarily divers others ſurviving; or if he have not that, uſually God raiſes him up others. 'Tis true we cannot have a ſucceſſion of Fathers and Mothers, yet we often have of other friends that are no leſs helpful to us: and indeed there are ſcarce in any thing more remarkable evidences of Providence, than in this particular. *He that is able out of ſtones to raiſe up children to Abraham*, Matt. 3. 9. do's many times by as unexpected a production ſupply friends to the deſolate. But we do ſomtimes loſe our friends while they are living, they withdraw their kindneſs which is the ſoul of friendſhip: and if this happen by our own demerit, we can accuſe neither God nor them for it: nor can we rationally expect that God ſhould provide ſupplies, when we wilfully deſpoil our ſelves. But when they are unkind without provocation, then is the ſeaſon for his interpoſition, who uſes to take up *thoſe whom Father and Mother forſake*, Pſalm 27. 10. and we frequently ſee ſignal proofs of his care in exciting the compaſſions of other friends and relatives, or perhaps of mere ſtrangers. Nay ſomtimes God makes the inhumanity of a man's relations,

relations, the occaſion of his advantage. Thus the barbarous malice of *Joſephs* brethren was the firſt ſtep to his Dominion over *Egypt*. And it is a common obſervation in Families, that the moſt diſcountenanc'd child oft makes better proof, than the dearling.

Whatſoever calamities they ſuſtain they have the ſame before-recited alleviations with our own.

10. We are yet liable to a third affliction by the calamity of our friends, which by the Sympathy of Kindneſs preſſes us no leſs (perhaps more) ſenſibly than our own: but then 'tis to be conſider'd that theirs are capable of the ſame allaying circumſtances that ours are, and God has the ſame arts of alleviating their burdens; ſo that we have the ſame arguments for acquieſcence in their ſufferings that we have in our own, and ſhall do a more friendly office in impreſſing thoſe upon them, than in the moſt paſſionate adopting their ſorrows.

Even the ſin of a Relative is not void of all comfort.

11. The laſt and greateſt diſcomfort from friends, is that of their ſin: and if ever we may be allow'd that diſconſolate ſtrein of the Prophet, Eſa. 22. 4. *Turn away from me, I will weep bitterly, labor not to comfort me*; this ſeems to be the time. Yet even this *valley of Achor is not without a door of hope*, Hoſ. 22. 15. A vicious perſon may be recalled, multitudes have bin; ſo that as long as God continues life, we ought no more to depoſite our hope than to quit our endevor. Beſides there are few that make this complaint that have not ſomthing to balance, or at leaſt to lighten it. I ſhall inſtance in that relation which is the neareſt and moſt tender, that of a Parent. He that has one bad child, may have divers good. If he have but one virtuous 'tis a very great mercy, and 'tis another that he may be the better taught to value it by the oppoſition of the contrary. But if any be ſo unhappy as to have many children, and *all to conſume his eies and grieve his heart*, 1 Sam. 2. 33. it may be a ſeaſonable reflection for him to examin how far he has contributed to it, either by *Ely's* fond indulgence, or by a remiſs and careleſs education: or which is worſt of all, by his moſt impious example. If any, or all of theſe be found the cauſe, he is not ſo much to ſeek for allaies to his grief, as for pardon of his ſin: and when he has penitently retracted his own faults, he may then have better ground of hope that God may reform thoſe of his children. In the mean time he may look on his own affliction in them as God's diſcipline on him, and gather at leaſt this comfort from it, that his heavenly Father has more care of him, than he had of his; and does not leave him uncorrected.

As in the greater world there grow ſpecifics for the maladies of every clime, ſo it is in the leſſer.

12. Thus we ſee in all the concerns (which are the moſt common and important of human life, and wherein the juſteſt of our complaints are uſually founded) there is ſuch a temperature and mixture, that the good do's more than equal the ill; and that not only in the groſſer bulk, when our whole ſtate is weighed together, but in every ſingle branch of it: God having herein dealt with this little world Man, as he has don with the greater, wherein he is obſerv'd to have furniſhed every country with Specific remedies for their peculiar diſeaſes. I have only given theſe ſhort hints by way of eſſay and pattern for the Readers contemplation, which when he ſhall have extended to all thoſe more minute particulars wherein he is eſpecially concern'd, more curiouſly compar'd his ſufferings with his allaies and comforts; I cannot doubt but he will own himſelf an inſtance of the truth of the preſent Theſis, and confeſs, that he has much more cauſe of thankfulneſs than complaint.

They who have no croſſes of God's impoſing, create a multitude to themſelves.

13. This I ſay ſuppoſing his afflictions to be of thoſe more ſolid and conſiderable ſorts I have before mention'd. But how many are there who have few or none of ſuch, who ſeem to be ſeated in the land of *Goſhen*,

Goſhen, in a place exemt from all the plagues that infeſt their neighbors? And thoſe one would think ſhould give a ready ſuffrage to this concluſion, as having no temtation to oppugn it; yet I doubt 'tis far otherwiſe, and that ſuch men are of all the moſt unſatisfied. For tho they have no croſſes of Gods impoſing, they uſually create a multitude to themſelves. And here we may ſay with *David*, *it is better to fall into the hand of God, then into the hand of man*, 2 Sam. 24. 14. 'tis eaſier to bear the afflictions God ſends, then thoſe we make to our ſelves. His are limited both for quantity and quality, but our own are as boundleſs as thoſe extravagant deſires from which they ſpring.

Thoſe diſcontents which are moſt cauſeleſs are moſt importunate.

14. And this is the true cauſe why contentment is ſo much a ſtranger to thoſe who have all the outward cauſes of it. They have no definite meſure of their deſires; 'tis not the ſupply of all their real wants will ſerve their turn: their appetites are precarious and depend upon contingences. They hunger not becauſe they are emty, but becauſe others are full. Many a man would have liked his own portion well enough, had he not ſeen another have ſomthing he liked better. Nay even the moſt inconſiderable things acquire a value by being anothers, when we deſpiſe much greater of our own. *Ahab* might well have ſatisfied himſelf with the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, had not *Naboths* poor plot lain in his eie: but ſo raving were his deſires after it, that he diſreliſhes all the pomps of a Crown, yea the ordinary refreſhments of Nature, *can eat no bread* till he have that to furniſh him with Sallads, 1 *Kings* 21. 2. And how many are there now adaies whoſe cloths ſit uneaſy if they ſee another have had but the luck to be a liitle more ingeniouſly vain; whoſe meat is unſavory if they have ſeen but a greater rarity, a newer cookery at anothers Table: in a word who make other peoples exceſſes the ſtandard of their own felicities.

As our appetites are excited by outward objects; ſo they are hurried on by inward luſts.

15. Nor are our appetites only excited thus by our outward objects, but precipated and hurried on by our inward luſts. The proud man ſo longs for homage and adoration, that nothing can pleaſe him if that be wanting. *Haman* can find no guſt in all the ſenſualities of the *Perſian* Court, becauſe a poor deſpicable Jew denies his abaiſance, *Eſt.* 5. 13. The luſtful ſo impatiently purſues his impure deſigns, that any difficulty he meets in them, makes him pine and languiſh like *Amnon*, who could no way recover his own health but by violating his ſiſters honor, 2 *Sam.* 13. 14. The revengeful labors under an Hydropic thirſt till he have the blood of his enemy: all the liquor of *Abſoloms* ſheep-ſheering could not quench his, without the ſlaughter of his brother, 2 *Sam.* 13. 22. And thus every one of our paſſions keeps us upon the rack till they have obtained their deſigns. Nay when they have, the very emtineſs of thoſe acquiſitions is a new torment, and put us upon freſh purſuits. Thus between the impetuouſneſs of our deſires, and the emtineſs of our enjoiments, we ſtill *diſquiet our ſelves in vain*, Pſal. 39. 7. And whil'ſt we have ſuch cruel task-maſters 'tis not ſtrange to find us groaning under our burdens. If we will indulge to all our vicious or fooliſh appetites, think our lives bound up with them, and ſollicite the ſatisfaction of them with as impatient a vehemence, as *Rachel* did for children, Gen. 30. 1. *give me them or I die:* no wonder that we are alwaies complaining of diſappointments, ſince in theſe the very ſucceſs is a defeat, and is but the exchanging the pain of a craving ravenous ſtomach, for that of a cloi'd and nauſeated. Indeed men of this temper condemn themſelves to a perpetual reſtleſsneſs: they are like phantaſtic mutineers, who when their ſuperiors ſend them blanks to write their

own conditions, know not what will pleaſe them: and even Omnipotence it ſelf cannot ſatisfy theſe till it have new moulded them, and reduced their deſires to a certainty.

A great cauſe of our diſcontent, is the enjoiment of what we deſire.

16. But in the mean time how unjuſtly do they accuſe God of illiberality, becauſe every thing anſwers not their humor? He has made them reaſonable creatures, and has provided them ſatisfactions proportionable to their nature; but if they will have wild irrational expectations, neither his wiſdom, nor his goodneſs is concern'd to ſatisfy thoſe. His ſupplies are real and ſolid, and therefore have no correſpondence to imaginary wants. If we will create ſuch to our ſelves, why do we not create an imaginary ſatisfaction to them? Twere the merrier frenzy of the two, to be like the mad *Athenian* that thought all the ſhips that came into his harbor his own: and twere better *Ixion* like to have our Arms fill'd with a cloud, then to have them perpetually beating our own breaſts, and be ſtill tormenting our ſelves with unſatisfiable deſires. Yet this is the ſtate to which men voluntarily ſubject themſelves, and then quarrel at God becauſe they will not let themſelves be happy. But ſure their very complaints juſtify God, and argue that he has dealt very kindly with them, and afforded them all the neceſſary accomodations of life: for did they want them, they would not be ſo ſenſible of the want of the other. He that is at perfect eaſe may feel with ſome vexation the biting of a flea or gnat, which would not be at all obſervable if he were upon the rack. And ſhould God change the ſcene, and make theſe nice people feet the deſtitution of neceſſaries: all theſe regrets about ſuperfluities would be overwhelmed. In the mean time how deplorable a thing is it, that we are ſtill the poorer for Gods bounty, that thoſe to whom he has opened his hand wideſt, ſhould open their mouth ſo too, in out-cries and murmurs? For I think I may ſay that generally, thoſe that are the fartheſt remov'd from want, are ſo from content too; they take no notice of all the real ſubſtantial bleſſings they enjoy, leave theſe (like the ninty nine ſheep in the wilderneſs) forgotten & neglected, to go in queſt after ſome fugitive ſatisfaction, which like a ſhadow flies ſtill faſter in proportion to their purſuit.

We ought to be gratefull for what we have receiv'd before we repine for want of more.

17. And now would God they could be recalled from this unprofitable chaſe, and inſtead of the Horſleeches note, *Give, give*, Prov. 30. 15. take up that of the Pſalmiſt, *what ſhall I render to the Lord for all the benefits he hath don unto me?* Pſal. 116. 12. Let them count how many valuable or rather ineſtimable things, they have received from his mercy, and then confront them with thoſe corrections they have found from his juſtice; and if they do this impartially, I doubt not they will find wherewithall to check their higheſt mutinies; and will join with me in confeſſing, that their good things abundantly outweigh their ill.

The duration of mercies ſurpaſſes that of judgments.

18. If now we carry on the compariſon to the laſt circumſtance, and conſider the Conſtancy, we ſhall find as wide a difference. Let us take the Pſalmiſts teſtimony, and there will appear a very diſtant date of his mercies and puniſhments. *His mercies endure for ever*, Pſ. 136. whereas his wrath *endures but the twinkling of an eie*, Pſal. 30. 5. And accordingly God owns his acts of ſeverity as his *ſtrange work*, Iſa. 28. 21. that which he reſorts to only upon ſpecial emergencies; but his mercies *are renewed every morning*, Lam. 3. 25. and doubtleſs we may all upon trial affirm the ſame. There are many of the moſt neceſſary comforts of life which do not only ſomtimes viſit us as gueſts, but dwell with us as inmates and domeſtics. How many are there who have lived in a perpetual affluence from their cradles to their graves, have never known what it is to want? And tho the goods

of

of fortune are perhaps leſs conſtant to ſome, yet the refreſhments of nature are uſually ſo to us all. We eat and drink, we ſleep, we recreate, we converſe in a continued circle, and go our round almoſt as conſtantly as the Sun do's his. Or if God do's ſomtimes a little interrupt us in it, put ſome ſhort reſtraint upon our refreſhments, yet that comparatively to the time we enjoy them, is but proportionable to the ſtop he has ſomtimes made of the Sun, *Joſh.* 10. 13. 2 *Kings* 20. 11. or of the ſea, *Exod.* 14. 21. which as they were no ſubverſions of the courſe of nature, ſo neither are thoſe ſhort pauſes he ſomtimes makes, a repeal of thoſe fixt and cuſtomary benefits his providence uſually allots us. But who is there can ſay that any one of his afflictions has bin of equal continuance, or has preſt him with ſo few intermiſſions? Perhaps he may have miſt ſome few nights ſleep: but what is that to a twelve-months, or perhaps a whole lives enjoying it? 'Tis poſſible his ſtomach and his meat have not alwaies bin ready together; but how much oftner have they met to his delight? and generally thoſe things that are moſt uſeful, are but rarely interrupted. Nay to a great many even the delicacies of life are no leſs conſtant, and their luxuries are as quotidian as their bread: whereas unleſs their vices or their fancies create uneaſineſſes to them, thoſe that come immediatly from God's hand, make long intermiſſions and ſhort ſtaies. Yet for all this they that ſhould meaſure by the unceſſantneſs of mens complaints, would judg that the ſcene was quite reverſt, and that our good things are as *Job* ſpeaks, *ſwifter than a weavers ſhuttle*, Job. 7. 6. whilſt our ills, like *Gehazies Leproſy*, *cleave inſeparably to us*, 2 Kings 5. 10.

19. The truth is, we will not let our ſelves enjoy thoſe intervals God allowes us, but when a calamity do's retire we will ſtill keep it in fiction and imagination; revolve it in our minds, and becauſe 'tis poſſible it may return, look upon it as not gon. Like Aguiſh patients we count our ſelves ſick on our well-day, becauſe we expect a fit the next. A ſtrange ſtupid folly thus to court vexation, and be miſerable in Chimera. Do's any man, or indeed any beaſt deſire to keep a diſtaſtful reliſh ſtill in his mouth, to chew the cud upon gall and wormwood? Yet certainly there are a multitude of people whoſe lives are imbitter'd to them merely by theſe fantaſtic imaginary ſufferings. Nor do we only fright our ſelves with images and Ideas of paſt calamities, but we dreſs up new bugbears and mormoes, are Poetic and aerial in our inventions, and lay Romantic ſcenes of diſtreſſes. This is a thing very incident to jealous natures, who are alwaies raiſing alarms to themſelves. A ſuſpicious man looks on every body with dread. One man he fears has deſigns upon his fortune, another on his reputation, perhaps a third upon his life: whilſt in the mean time, the only ill deſign againſt him is managed by himſelf; his own cauſeleſs fears and jealouſies, which put him in a ſtate of hoſtility with all the world, and do often betray him to the very things he groundleſly ſuſpected. For it is not ſeldom ſeen that men have incurr'd reall miſchiefs by a fond ſollicitude of avoiding imaginary ones. I do not queſtion but this is a ſtate calamitous enough, and ſhall acknowledg it very likely that ſuch perſons ſhall have little or no truce from their troubles, who have ſuch an unexhauſted ſpring within themſelves; yet we may ſay to them as the Prophet did to the houſe of *Jacob*, *Is the ſpirit of the Lord ſtraitned? are theſe his doings?* Micha 2. 7. Such men muſt not cry out that God's hand lies heavy upon them, but their own; and ſo can be no impeachment to the truth of our obſervations, that God's bleſſings are of a longer duration, keep a more fixt, ſteddy courſe

When calamities are paſt, we keep them in fiction, like aguiſh patients count our ſelves ſick on our well-day.

then his puniſhments. The reſult of all is, that the generality of mankind have good things (even as to temporals) which do in the three reſpects forementiond exceed the ill. I mean the true and real things which God ſends, tho not thoſe fanciful ones they raiſe to themſelves.

'Tis equally imprudent & unjuſt to entertain our ſelves with the unpleaſant part of Gods diſpenſations.

20. And now why ſhould it not appear a reaſonable propoſition that men ſhould entertain themſelves with the pleſanter parts of Gods diſpenſations to them, and not alwaies pore upon the harſher: eſpecially ſince the former are ſo much a fairer object, and perpetually in their eie, why ſhould we look on the more ſadning ſpectacles of human frailty or miſfortune, thro all the magnifying optics our fancies can ſupply, and perverſly turn away our eies from the chearfuller? Yet this God knows is too much the caſe with moſt of us. How nicely and critically do we obſerve every little adverſe accident of our lives? What tragical ſtories of them do our memories preſent us with? When alas a whole current of proſperity glides by without our notice. Like little children our fingers are never off the ſore place, till we have pikt every light ſcratch into an Ulcer. Nay like the leuder ſort of beggars, we make artificial ſores to give us a pretence of complaint. And can we then expect God ſhould concern himſelf in the cure? Indeed in the courſe of his ordinary providence there is no cure for ſuch people, unleſs it be by revulſion, the making them feel the ſmart of ſome very great and preſſing affliction. They therefore put themſelves under an unhappy dilemma, either to continue their own tormentors, or to endure the ſevereſt courſe of Gods diſcipline. 'Tis true the laſt is the more eligible; but I am ſure the beſt way is to prevent both, by a juſt and grateful ſenſe of Gods mercies: which will be yet farther illuſtrated if we compare them with our own demerits.

SECT. V.

Of our Demerit towards God.

Our dealing with God is contrary to all methods of commerce with men.

1. IT is the common fault of our nature, that we are very apt to be partial to our ſelves; and to ſquare our expectations more by what we wiſh, then by what we deſerve. Somthing of this is viſible in our dealings with men. We oft *look to reap where we have not ſown*, Matt. 25. 25. expect benefits where we do none: yet in civil tranſactions there are ſtill remaining ſuch footſteps of natural juſtice, that we are not univerſally ſo unreaſonable: All traffic and commerce ſubſiſting upon the principle of equal retribution, giving one good thing for another equivalent; ſo that no man expects to buy corn with chaff, or Gold with droſs. But in our dealings with God, we put off even this common equity; are vaſt in our expectations, but penurious and baſe in our returns; and as if God were our ſteward, not our Lord, we require of him with a confidence proper only to thoſe who ask their own: whilſt in the interim, what we offer to him is with ſuch a diſdainful ſlighting, as if we meant it rather an alms then an homage.

God's firſt donations are free, but his ſubſequent are conditional.

2. God indeed is ſo munificent, that he *prevents us with his bleſſings*, Pſal. 21. 3. gives us many things before we ask: Had he not don ſo, we could not have bin ſo much as in a capacity of asking. But tho the firſt and fundamental

mental mercies are absolute and free, yet the subsequent are conditional: and accordingly we find in Scripture, that God makes no promise either concerning this life or a better, but on condition of Obedience. The *Jews* who had much larger proposals of temporal happiness then Christians have, yet never had them upon other terms. God expressly articled for the performance of his commands, and made all their enjoiments forfeitable upon the failure, as we may see at large in the book of Deuteronomy. And under the Gospel St. *Paul* appropriates the *promises as well of this life as that to come unto godliness*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. It will therefore be a material inquiry for every man, whether he have kept his title entire, and have not by breach of the condition forfeited his clame, even to the most common ordinary blessings; for if he have, common reason will tell him he can challenge none: and that the utmost he can hope for, must be only upon a new score of unmerited favor.

Our services make a very unequal return to our obligations.

3. And here certainly *every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God*, Rom. 3. 19. For alas who is there that can say his obedience has bin in any degree proportionable to his obligation? 'Tis manifest we have all received abundantly from Gods hand, but what has he had from ours? I may challenge the best man, to cast up the account of his best day, and tell me whether his receits have not infinitly exceeded his disbursments: whether for any one good thing he has don, he has not received many. Nor is the disparity only in number, but much more in value. Gods works are perfect, all he do's for us like the first six daies productions, *are all very good*, Gen. 1. but alas our very *righteousness is as filthy rags*, Esai. 64. 6. we offer *him the blind and the lame*, Mal. 1. 9. a few yawning drowsy praiers perhaps, wherein he has the least share: the fuller current of our thoughts running towards our secular or sinful concerns. We drop it may be a scanty Alms, wherein 'tis odds our vain-glory scrambles for a share with him; if it do not wholly ingross it. We fit an hour at a sermon, but 'tis rather to hear the wit or eloquence of the preacher, then the word of God. Like the duller sort of animals, we like well to have our itching ears scratcht, but grow sturdy & restive when we should do what we are there taught. In a word all our services at the best are miserably maim'd and imperfect; and too often corrupt and unsound. So that God may well upbraid us as he did *Israel*, *offer it now to the governor, will he be pleas'd with it?* Mal. 1. 8. These very iniquities of our holy things, are enough to defeat all our pretences to any good from Gods hand; yet God knows this is much the best side of us: 'tis not every one that can make so fair an appearance as this amounts to. With many, there is no place to complain of the blemishes of their sacrifices, for they offer none; of whom we may say in the words of the Psalmist, *God is not in all their thoughts*, Ps. 10. 4. I fear there want not those who drive away the day, the week, nay the year, without remembring in whose *hand their time is*, Psal. 31. 18. or paying him any solemn tribute of it; who enjoy the services of all inferior creatures, without considering that theirs are more due to the supreme Lord: in a word, who live as if they were absolutely independent; had their existence purely from themselves, & had no Creator to whom they owed their being, or any consequent duty. And sure men who thus discard themselves from Gods family, have very little reason to expect the provisions of it: yet even such as these have the impudence to complain, if any thing be wanting to their needs (shall I say) or to their lusts; can ravingly profane Gods name in their impatiences, which they know not how to use in their praiers: as if the Deity were considerable in no other notion, then that of their caterer or steward.

God's patience herein, is most admirable,

4. If now we ſeriouſly reflect, what can be more admirable than that infinite patience of God; who notwithſtanding the miſerable infirmities of the pious, and the leud contemt of the impious, ſtill goes on reſolutely in his bounty, and continues to all mankind ſome, and to ſome all his temporal bleſſings? He has no obligation of juſtice to do ſo, for it is no part of his compact; he has none of gratitude, for he is perpetually affronted and diſobliged. Surely we may well ſay with *David, Is this after the manner of men, O Lord?* 1 Chron. 17. 17. Can the higheſt human indulgence bear any proportion with his Divine Clemency? No certainly, no finite patience but would be exhauſted with the thouſandth part of our provocations.

And ſo is the inſolence of our repining.

5. But is not our dealing too as little after the manner of men? I mean of reaſonable creatures: for us who have forfeited our right to all, and yet by mere favor are kept in the poſſeſſion of many bleſſings: for us to grow mutinous, becauſe there is perhaps ſomthing more trifling which is deni'd us, is ſuch a ſtupid ingratitude, as one would think impoſſible to human nature. Should a Tenant with us have at once forfeited his leaſe and maliciouſly affronted his Landlord, he would ſure think himſelf very gently dealt with, if he were ſuffer'd to enjoy but a part of his firſt eſtate; but we ſhould think him not only inſolent, but mad, who when the whole were left him, ſhould quarrel and clamor if he might not have his Cottage adorn'd with marble floors, and gilded roofs. Yet at this wild rate we behave our ſelves to our great Landlord, grow pettiſh and angry if we have not every thing we can fancy, tho we enjoy many more uſeful, merely by his indulgence. And can there be any thing imagin'd more unreaſonable? Let us therefore, if not for piety, yet at leaſt to juſtify our clame to rationality, be more ingenuous; let us not conſult only with our fond appetites, and be thus perpetually ſolliciting their ſatisfaction; but rather reflect on what tenure we hold what we already have, even that of ſuperabundant mercy; and fear leaſt like inſolent beggars by the inſolence of our demands we divert even that charity which was deſign'd us. In ſhort let every man when he computes what he wants of his deſires, reckon as exactly how much he is ſhort of his duty; and when he has duly ponder'd both, he will think it a very gentle compoſition to have the one unſupplied, ſo he may have the other remitted; and will ſee cauſe contentedly to ſit down & ſay with honeſt *Mephiboſheth, What right have I to cry any more unto the King?* 2 Sam. 19. 28. But if it be thus with us upon the mere ſcore of our imperfections or omiſſions, what an obnoxious ſtate do our innumerable actual ſins put us in? If the ſpots of our ſacrifices are provoking, what are our ſacrileges and bold profanations? If thoſe who neglect or forget God are liſted among his enemies, what are thoſe who avowedly defy him? Indeed he that ſoberly conſiders the world, and ſees how daringly the Divine Majeſty is daily affronted, cannot but wonder that the perverſions of our manners, thoſe prodigies in morality, ſhould not be anſwer'd with as great prodigies in calamity too; that we ſhould ever have other ruin than that of *Sodom*, or the earth ſerve us for any other purpoſe than to be, as it was to *Korah*, Num. 16. our living ſepulcher.

Our ill demerit towards God has all poſſible aggravations.

6. Nor is this longanimity of God obſervable only towards the maſs and collective body of mankind, but to every man in particular. Who is there that if he ranſack his conſcience, ſhall not find guilts enough to juſtify God in the utmoſt ſeverities towards him? ſo that how much ſoever his puniſhments are ſhort of that, ſo much he evidently owes to the lenity and compaſſion of God. And who is there that ſuffers in this world the utmoſt

that

that God can inflict? We have a great many ſuffering capacities, and if thoſe were all fill'd up to the height, our condition would ſcarce differ from that of the damned in any thing but duration. But God is more merciful, and never inflicts at that rate on us here. Every man's experience can tell him, that God diſcharges not his whole quiver at once upon him, but exemts him in many more particulars than he afflicts him; and yet the ſame experience will probably tell moſt of us, that we are not ſo modeſt in our aſſaults upon God; we attacque him in all his concerns, (as far as our feeble malice can reach) in his Soveraingty, in his honor, in his relatives, nay ſomtimes in his very eſſence and being. And as they are univerſal in reſpect of him, ſo alſo in regard of our ſelves. We engage all our powers in this war, do not only *yield* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *our members inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs*, Rom. 6. 19. but we preſs them upon the ſervice of ſenſual and vile luſts, even beyond our native propenſions. Nor are only the members of our body, but the faculties of our ſouls alſo thus emploied; our underſtandings are buſied firſt in contriving ſins, and then excuſes and diſguiſes for them; our wills are yet more ſturdy rebels, and when the underſtanding is beat out of all its out-works, yet ſullenly keep their hold in ſpight of all conviction; and our affections madly ruſh on *like the horſe into the battel*, Jer. 8. 6. deterred by nothing of danger, ſo there be but ſin enough in the attemt.

7. And now with what face can people that thus purſue an hoſtility, expect that it ſhould not be return'd to them? Do's any man denounce war, and yet expect from his adverſary all the careſſes, the obligements of friendſhip? Self-defence will promt even the meekeſt nature to deſpoil his enemy, at leaſt of thoſe things which he uſes to his annoiance; and if God ſhould give way even to that loweſt degree of anger, where or what were we? For ſince we employ our whole ſelves againſt him, nothing but deſtruction can avert our injuries. But 'tis happy for us we have to do with one who cannot fear us, who knows the impotence of our wild attemts, and ſo allaies his reſentment of our inſolence, with his pity of our follies. Were it not for this, we ſhould not be left in a poſſibility ſo oft to iterate our provocations. Every wicked imagination and black deſign, would be at once defeated ad puniſht by infatuation and frenzy: every blaſphemous Atheiſtical ſpeech would wither the tongue like that *arm of Jeroboam* which he ſtretcht againſt the Prophet, 1 Kings 13. 4. and every impious act would like the prohibited retroſpect of *Lots* wife, fix us perpetual monuments of Divine vengeance.

And were not God infinitly merciful, would be fatal to the guilty.

8. And then how much do we owe to the mercy and commiſeration of our God, that *he ſuffers not his whole diſpleſure to ariſe*, Pſalm 78. 38. that he abates any thing of that juſt ſeverity he might uſe towards us? He that is condemned to the Gallows, would think it a mercy to ſcape with any inferior penalty: why have we then ſuch mean thoughts of God's Clemency, when he deſcends to ſuch low compoſitions with us, corrects us ſo lightly, as if 'twere only matter of ceremony and punctilio, the regard of his honor, rather than the execution of his wrath? For alas let him among us that is the moſt innocent & undeſervedly afflicted, muſter up his ſins and ſufferings, and he will ſee a vaſt inequality: and (had he not other grounds of aſſurance) would be almoſt temted to think thoſe were not the provoking cauſe, they are ſo unproportionably anſwered. He ſins in innumerable inſtances, and is puniſht in few; he ſins habitually and perpetually, and ſuffers rarely and ſeldom; nay perhaps he has ſomtimes ſin'd with greedineſs, and yet God has puniſht with regret and reluctancy, *How ſhall I give thee*

Which forbearance ought to lead to repentance.

thee up, O Ephraim? Hoſ. 11. 8. And when all theſe diſparities are conſider'd, we muſt certainly join heartily in *Ezra*'s confeſſion, *Thou, O God, has puniſht us leſs than our iniquities deſerve*, Ezra 9. 13.

Our after-guilts or repinings aggravate our precedent provocations,

9. Nay beſides all our antecedent, we have after-guilts no leſs provoking, I mean our ungracious repinings at the light chaſtiſements of our former ſins, our out-cries upon every little uneaſineſs, which may juſtly cauſe God to turn our whips into ſcorpions; and according as he threatned *Iſrael*, Lev. 26. 18. *to puniſh us yet ſeven times more.* And yet even this do's not immediatly exaſperate him. The *Jews* were an inſtance how long he could bear with a murmuring generation, but certainly we of this nation are a greater: *yet let us not be high-minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. for we ſee at laſt the doom fell heavy, tho it was protracted: a ſucceſſion of miraculous judgments purſued thoſe murmurers, ſo that not one of them enter'd *Canaan.* And 'tis very obſervable that whereas to other ſins God's denunciations are in Scripture conditional and reverſible; this was abſolute and bound with an oath, *He ſware in his wrath that they ſhould not enter into his reſt*, Pſalm 95. 11. And yet if we compare the hardſhips of the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, with moſt of our ſufferings, we ſhall be forced to confeſs our mutinies have leſs temtation, and conſequently leſs excuſe. From whence 'tis very reaſonable to infer, as the greatneſs of our danger if we perſiſt, ſo the greatneſs of God's long-ſuffering towards us, who yet allows us ſpace to reform: and ſure new complaints ſound very ill from us, who are liable to ſo ſevere an account for our old ones. I fear the moſt reſign'd perſons of us will upon recollection find, they have upon one occaſion or other out-vied the number of the *Iſraelites* murmurs: therefore unleſs we will emulate them in their plagues, let us fear to add one more, leaſt that make up the fatal ſum, & render our deſtruction irrevocable.

Eſpecially when our ſufferings are the immediat effects of our ſins.

10. Upon all theſe conſiderations it appears how little reaſon any of us have to repine at our heavieſt preſſures; but there is yet a farther circumſtance to be adverted to, and is too applicable to many of us, that is, that our ſins are not only the conſtant meritorious cauſe of our ſufferings, but they are alſo very often the inſtrumental cauſe alſo; and produce them not only by way of retaliation from God, but by a natural efficacy. *Solomon* tells us, he that *loves pleſure, ſhall be a poor man*, and that *a whoriſh woman will bring a man to a piece of bread*, Prov. 6. 26. *that he that ſits long at the wine ſhall have redneſs of eies*, Chap. 23. 29, 30. *that the ſlothful ſoul ſtall ſuffer hunger*, 19. 15. and all theſe not by immediate ſupernatural infliction from God, but as the proper genuine effects of thoſe reſpective vices. Indeed God in his original eſtabliſhment of things, has made ſo cloſe a connexion between ſin and puniſhment, that he is not often put to exert his power in any extraordinary way, but may truſt us to be our own Lictors, our own *backſlidings reprove us*, Jer. 2. 19. *and our iniquities are* of themſelves enough to *become our ruin*, Exod. 18. 38.

In all calamities it will be fit for us to enquire how far we are acceſſary to them.

11. It may therefore be a ſeaſonable queſtion for every man to put to himſelf, whether the troubles he labors under be not of this ſort; whether the poverty he complains of, be not the effect of his riot and profuſion, his ſloth and negligence? whether when he cries out that *his comelines is turn'd into corruption*, Dan. 10. 8. he may not anſwer himſelf, that they are his viſits to the harlots houſes which have thus made *rottenneſs enter into his bones*, Hab. 3. 16. whether when he is beſet with contentions, and has wounds without cauſe, *he have not tarried long at the wine*; when he has loſt his friend, whether he have not by ſome *trecherous wound*, Eccl. 22. 22. forced him to depart: or when he lies under infamy, whether it be not only

only the Echo of his own ſcandalous crimes? If he find it thus with him, certainly his mouth is ſtopt, and cannot without the moſt diſingenuous impudence complain of any but himſelf. He could not be ignorant that ſuch effects did naturally attend ſuch cauſes, and therefore if he would take the one, he muſt take the other alſo. No man ſure can be ſo mad, as to think God ſhould work miracles (diſunite thoſe things which nature hath conjoin'd) only that he may ſin at eaſe, have all the beſtial pleſures he can project, and none of the conſequent ſmart. We read indeed God divided the ſea, but it was to make *the way for the ranſom'd of the Lord to paſs over*, Iſa. 15. 10. thoſe who were his own people, and went in at his command; but when they were ſecured, we find the waters immediately return'd to their channel, and overwhelmed the Egyptians, who ventured without the ſame warrant. And ſure the caſe is alike here, when any man can produce Gods mandate for him to run into all exceſs of riot, to deſecrate the temple of the holy Ghoſt, *and make his body the member of an harlot*, 1 Cor. 6. 15. in a word when God bids him do any of thoſe things, which God and good men abhor, then and not before he may hope he may ſever ſuch acts from their native penal effects; for till then (how profuſe ſoever ſome Legendary ſtories repreſent him) he will certainly never ſo beſtow his miracles.

12. But, I fear upon ſcrutiny there will appear a yet farther circumſtance upon which to arraign our mutinies: for tho it be unreaſonable enough to charge God with the ill effects of our own leudneſs, yet 'tis a higher ſtep to murmur becauſe we have not materials to be wicked enough. And this I fear is the caſe with too many of us, who tho they are not ſo deſpoil'd by their ſins, but that they can keep up their round of vicious pleſures, yet are diſcontented becauſe they think ſome others have them more exquiſite, think their vices are not Gentile enough, unleſs they be very expenſive, and are covetous only that they may be more Luxurious. Theſe are ſuch as St. *James* ſpeaks of, *who aſk amiſs, that they may conſume it upon their luſts*, Jam. 4. 3. and ſure to be mutinous on this account is one of the higheſt pieces of frenzy. Would any man in his wits tell another he will cut his throat, and then expect he ſhould furniſh him with a knife for it? And yet to this amount our murmurs againſt God, for his not giving us thoſe things wherewith we only deſign to wage war with him. For ſurely if the diſcontents of mankind were cloſely inſpected, I doubt a great many would be found of this kind. It concerns the Reader therefore to make the inquiſition in his own breaſt, both in this and all the former partciulars; and I doubt not, if he do it with any ingenuity and uprightneſs, he will be abundantly convinced that for his few mites of obedience he paies to God, he receives talents of mercies (even temporal) from him: and that on the other ſide, that God as much underpaies his ſins, as he overpaies his ſervices: by which God do's ſufficiently atteſt how little he delights in our affliction, how gladly he takes any light occaſion of careſſing and cheriſhing, and over-skips thoſe of puniſhing us. Which ſure ought to make us convert all our diſpleſures againſt our ſins, which extort thoſe acts of ſeverity from him, to which his nature is moſt averſe. And here indeed our reſentments cannot be too ſharp, but towards God our fitteſt addreſs will be in the penitential form of the Prophet Daniel, *O Lord, to us belongeth confuſion of face, but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveneſs, tho we have rebelled againſt him*, Dan. 9. 8, 9. And as his juſtice is to be revered in his inflictions, ſo is his wiſdom alſo, in ſo diſpoſing of events to particulars perſons, as may beſt conſiſt with the univerſal Oeco-

Men are ſo impious to murmur becauſe they have not materials to be wicked enough.

nomy and managery of the world, the conſideration whereof is the deſign of the next Section.

SECT. VI.

Of Gods general Providence.

Providence which extends to all parts of the creation, is peculiarly carefull of men.

1. WHen God made the univerſe, he intended not only to glorify himſelf in one tranſient act of his power, and then leave this great and wonderful production of his, as the *Oſtrich her eggs* in the wilderneſs, Lam. 4. 3. but having drawn it out of its firſt Chaos, he ſecur'd it from returning thither again, by eſtabliſhing as a due ſumetry of parts, ſo alſo a regular order of motion. Hence it is that the heavens have their conſtant revolutions, the earth its ſucceſſion of determinate ſeaſons, animals their alternate courſe of generation and corruption: and by this wiſe Oeconomy, the world after ſo many thouſand years, ſeems ſtill in its ſpring and firſt beauty. But it had bin in vain to have thus ſecured the defection of the creatures, if man for whoſe ſake they were made had bin excluded from this care. His faculty of reaſon would have made him but the more fatal inſtrument of confuſion, and taught him the more compendious waies of diſturbing the world. *Job* compares him *to the wild aſſes colt*, Job. 11. 12. which takes its range without adverting to any thing of the common good. God has therefore doubly hedged in this unruly creature, made a fence of laws about him (both natural and poſitive) and beſides has taken him into the common circle of his providence, ſo that he, as well as the reſt of the creation, has his particular ſtation aſſign'd him, and that not only in reference to other creatures, but himſelf; has put a difference between one man and another, ordained ſeveral ranks and Claſſes of men, and endowed them with ſpecial and appropriate qualifications for thoſe ſtations wherein he has ſet them.

This overruling power is of unſpeakable advantage to mankind.

2. This, as it is a work of infinit wiſdom in God, ſo it is of unſpeakable advantage to men. Without this regular diſpoſure, the world would have bin the ſame confuſion which we read of in the hoſt of the *Midianites, every mans ſword againſt his fellow*, Jud. 7. 22. Nothing but force could determin who ſhould do, or enjoy any thing; and even that deciſion alſo would have bin repealable by a greater force: ſo that we have all reaſon to confeſs the utility of that order God has ſet among men: and even he that bears the loweſt and moſt deſpicable place in it, is certainly infinitly more happy by contributing to that general Harmony, then he could be in any ſtate of diſcord.

A due conſideration whereof ſilences all complaints.

3. Were this now well conſider'd, methinks it ſhoud ſilence all our complaints, and men ſhould not be ſo vehemently concern'd in what part of the ſtructure it pleaſes the great Architect to put them: for every man is to look on himſelf only as ſmall parcel of thoſe materials which God is to put into form. Every ſtone is not fit for the corner, nor every little rafter for the main beam: the wiſdom of the Maſter-builder is alone to determin that. And ſure there cannot be a more vile contemt of the Divine wiſdom then to diſpute his choice. Had God wiſdom enough to contrive this vaſt and beautiful fabric, and may he not be truſted with one of us poor worms? Did he by his *wiſdom make the heavens, and by his underſtanding ſtretch out the clouds*, Prov. 3. 19. and ſhall he not know where

to

to place a little lump of figur'd earth? This is certainly the moſt abſurd diſtruſt imaginable, and yet this is really the true meaning of our repining at the condition he has placed us in.

'Tis moſt unreaſonabl to expect that the ſcheme of providence ſhould be model'd by our humor.

4. The truth is, we are ſo full of our ſelves, that we can ſee nothing beyond it: every man expects God ſhould place him where he has a mind to be, tho by it he diſcompoſe the whole ſcheme of his providence. But tho we are ſo ſenſeleſly partial, yet God is not ſo: he that comprehends at once the whole concern of mankind, applies himſelf to the accomodating thoſe, not the humoring any particular perſon. *He has made the great and ſmall, and careth for all alike*, Wiſd. 6. 7. He is the common Father of mankind, and diſpoſes things for the public advantage of this great family, and 'tis not all the impatient cravings of a froward child that ſhall make him recede from his deſigned method. We are apt enough, I am ſure, to tax it not only as a weakneſs, but injuſtice too in a Prince, when he indulges any thing to a private favorite to the public diſadvantage; yet ſo unequal are we, that we murmur at God for not doing that, which we murmur at men for doing.

Other men have the ſame appetites with us, and cannot be ſatisfied but by our diſappointment.

5. Beſides a man is to conſider, that other men have the ſame appetites with himſelf. If he diſlike an inferior ſtate, why ſhould he not think others do ſo too? And then as the wiſe man ſpeaks, *whoſe voice ſhall the Lord hear?* Ecclus. 34. 24. 'Tis ſure great inſolence in me to expect that God ſhould be more concern'd to humor me, then thoſe multitudes of others who have the ſame deſires. And the more impatient my longings are, the leſs in reaſon ſhould be my hopes; for mutiny is no ſuch endearing quality as to render any man a dearling to God. But if all men ſhould have equal ſatisfactions, we ſhould puzle even Omnipotence it ſelf. Every man would be above and ſuperior: yet thoſe are comparative terms, and if no man were below, no man could be above. So in wealth, moſt men deſire more, but every man do's at leaſt deſire to keep what he has; how then ſhall one part of the world be ſupplied without the diminution of the other, unleſs there ſhould be as miraculous a multiplication of treſure for mens avarice, as there was of Loaves for their hunger, Matt. 16. 9. It was a good anſwer which the Ambaſſadors of an oppreſt Province made to *Antony*; If O Emperor, thou wilt have double taxes from us, thou muſt help us to double Springs and Harveſts. And ſure God muſt be at the expence of a new Creation, make us a double world, if he ſhould oblige himſelf to ſatisfy all the unreaſonable appetites of men: and if he ſatisfy not all, why ſhould any particular perſon look that his alone ſhould be indulged to?

Self love is the ſource of moſt of our complaints.

6. Yet as unreaſonable as it is, the moſt of us do betray ſuch a perſwaſion. No man is diſcontented that there are lower, as well as higher degrees in the world, that there are poor as well as rich, but all ſenſible men aſſent to the fitneſs of it: yet if themſelves happen to be ſet in the lower form, they exclame as if the whole order of the world were ſubverted; which is a palpable indication that they think that Providence which governs others, ſhould ſerve them, and diſtribute to them not what it, but themſelves think good. This immoderate ſelf-love is the ſpring and root of moſt of our complaints, makes us ſuch unequal judges in our own concerns, and promts us to put in Caveats and exceptions in our own behalf, as *David* did on his ſons, *See that thou hurt not the young man Abſolom?* 2 Sam. 18. 15. as if God were to manage the government of the world with a particular regard to our liking, and were like the Angels at *Sodom*, Gen. 19. 22. to *do nothing till we had got into Zoar*, had all our demands ſecured to us.

We have in us the worſt part of the Leveller's principle, impatient to ſee any above us.

7. It would indeed aſtoniſh a conſidering man to ſee, that altho the concerns of men are all diſpoſed by an unerring Wiſdom, and acknowledged by themſelves to be ſo, yet that ſcarce any man is pleaſed. The truth is, we have generally in us the worſer part of the Levellers principle, and tho we can very contentedly behold multitudes below us, yet are impatient to ſee any above us; not only the *foot* (to uſe the Apoſtles ſimile) *complains that it is not the hand, but the ear becauſe it is not the eie*, 1 Cor. 12. 15, 16. Not only the lowermoſt, but the higher ranks of men are uneaſy, if there be any one ſtep above them. Nay ſo importunate is this aſpiring humor, that we ſee men are forced to feed it tho but with air and ſhadows. He that cannot make any real advance in his quality, will yet do it in effigie, in all little gaieties and pageantries of it. Every degree in theſe reſpects not only emulates, but imitates its ſuperior, till at laſt by that impatience of their proper diſtance they make it greater, and ſink even below their firſt ſtate by their ridiculous profuſion. Indeed the world ſeems to be ſo over-run with this vanity, that there is little viſible diſtinction of degrees, and one had need go to the Heralds office to know mens qualities, for neither their habit nor equipage do now adaies inform us with any certainty.

And conſider only our own humor or convenience, and not the public intereſt.

8. But by all theſe it appears that men look on themſelves only as ſingle perſons, without reference to the community whereof they are members. For did they conſider that, they would endevor rather to become the places wherein they were ſet, by doing the duties belonging to them, then be perpetually projecting for a change. A tree that is every year tranſplanted will never bear fruit; and a mind that is alwaies hurried from its proper ſtation, will ſcarce ever do good in any. This is excellently expreſt to us by *Solomon*, *As a bird that wandereth from his neſt, ſo is a man that wandereth from his place*, Prov. 27. 8. 'Tis eaſy to divine the fate of thoſe young ones from whom the dam wanders, and 'tis as eaſy to gueſs how the duties of that place will be performed, whoſe owner is alwaies upon the wing and making towards another. I wiſh we had not too coſtly experiments both in Church and State of the truth of this obſervation. Alas we forget that we are all ſervants to the ſame Maſter, and that he is to appoint in what office we ſhall ſerve him. How ſhould we like it in any of our own families, to have an inferior officer leave his work undon, becauſe he has more mind to be Major-Domo? Yet this inſolence we every day repete towards God, ſullenly diſpute his orders, and unleſs we may chuſe our own emploiments, will do nothing.

The reſtraint put upon ambitious ſpirits, is a great inſtance of providence.

9. 'Tis evident this perverſe temper of mankind breeds a great deal of miſchief and diſturbance in the world, but would breed arrant confuſion and ſubverſion, if it were ſuffer'd to have its full range. If God permit but one ambitious ſpirit to break looſe in an age as the inſtrument of his wrath, what deſtruction do's it often times make? How do's it *cauſe the whole earth to tremble, and ſhake Kingdoms*, as is ſaid of *Nebuchadnezzar*, Iſa. 14. 16. and may be ſaid of many others of thoſe whole-ſale robbers who have dignified the trade? But if every aſpiring humor ſhould be as proſperous, where would it find fuel to maintain the flame? No doubt every age produces men of as unbounded deſires as *Alexander* or *Ceſar*, but God gives them not the ſame opportunities to trouble the world. And accordingly in the more petty ambitions of private men he often orders it ſo, that thoſe ſoaring minds can find no benign gale to help their mounting. He that ſets bounds to the ſea, ſaying, *hitherto ſhalt thou come and no farther, and tho the waves thereof do toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail; tho they roar,*

roar, yet can they not paſs over, Jer. 5. 22. do's alſo depreſs the ſwelling pride of men, hangs clogs and weights upon them that they cannot riſe to their affected height. For tho we are all willing to forget it, yet God remembers that he is the Rector of the Univerſe, and will aſſert his Dominion. The ſubtileſt contrivance cannot circumvent him, the moſt daring pretender cannot wreſt any thing out of his hand; the *Lord will ſtill be King, be the people never ſo impatient*, Pſalm 99. 1. 'Twill therefore ſure be as well our prudence as our duty to *be ſtill, and know that he is God*, Pſalm 46. 10. with an humble dereliction of our own wills acquieſce in his, and not by ineffective ſtruglings provoke, whom we are ſure never to ſubdue. We may like unmanaged horſes ſome & fret, but ſtill God has the bridle in our jawes, and we cannot advance a ſtep farther than he permits us. Why ſhould we then create torment to our ſelves by our repinings, which only ſets us farther from our aims? 'Tis God's declared method to exalt the lowly, and 'tis obſervable in the firſt two Kings of *Iſrael* who were of God's immediate election, that he ſurpriſed them with that dignity when they were about mean and humble emploiments, the one ſearching his father's Aſſe, the other keeping his father's Sheep: and would men honeſtly and diligently exerciſe themſelves in the buſineſs of their proper calling, they might perhaps find it a more direct road to advancement, than all the ſiniſter arts by which ambitious men endevor to climb. *Solomon* ſets it down as an Aphoriſm, *ſeeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs, he ſhall ſtand before Kings, he ſhall not ſtand before mean men*, Prov. 22. 29. But whether it happen to have that effect or no, it will have a better; for it will ſweeten his preſent condition, divert his mind from mutinous reflections on other mens height, and his own lowneſs; for 'tis commonly men who mind not their work that are at ſo much leiſure to gaze. He that carefully plies his own buſineſs, will have his thoughts more concentred. And doubtleſs 'tis no ſmall happineſs to have them ſo, for 'tis their gadding too much abroad, looking on other mens conditions, that ſends them back (like *Dinah* deflowred) to put all in an uproar at home. The ſon of *Syrach* ſpeaks with tranſportation of the ſtate even of him that labors and is content, and calls it *a ſweet life*, Ecclus. 40. 18. And certainly 'tis infinitely more ſo than that of the greateſt Prince whoſe mind ſwells beyond his territories.

10. Upon all theſe conſiderations it cannot but appear very reaſonable that we ſhould leave God to govern the world, not be putting in like the ſons of *Zebedee* for the higheſt ſeats; but contentedly reſt our ſelves where he has placed us, till his providence (not our own deſigns) advance us. We can no where be ſo obſcure as to be hid from his eies; who as he valued the widow's mite above the great oblations of the rich, ſo he will no leſs graciouſly accept the humble endevors of the mean, than the more eminent ſervices of the mighty; himſelf having declared, that he accepts *according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. So that in what rank ſoever a man is ſet, he has ſtill the ſame opportunity of approving himſelf to God: and tho in the eie of the world he be a veſſel of diſhonor, yet in the day when God comes to *make up his Jewels*, Mal. 3. 17. there will be another eſtimate made of him who regularly moves in his own ſphere. And ſure he that ſits down in this acquieſcence is a happier man, than he that enjoles the greateſt worldly ſplendor: but infinitly more ſo than he who impatiently covets but cannot attain them; for ſuch a man puts himſelf upon a perpetual rack, keeps his appetites up at the utmoſt ſtretch, and yet has nothing wherewith to ſatisfy them. Let therefore our eaſe, if not our duty, promt us to acquieſ-

No man's ſtation is ſo obſcure, as to hide him from the eies of God.

cence, and a ready ſubmiſſion to God's diſpoſals, to which we have yet a farther inducement from that diſtinct care he hath over every mans peculiar, by which he proportions to him what is really beſt for him; of which we are farther to conſider in the next Section.

SECT. VII.

Of Gods particular Providence.

'Tis the imperfection of our nature, that we cannot attend at once to ſeveral things.

1. IT is the imperfection of our finite nature that we cannot at once attend to divers things, but the more vehement our intention is upon one, the greater is our neglect of the reſt. But God's infinity cannot be ſo bounded; his eies at once ſee, and his providence at once orders all the moſt diſtant and diſparate things in the world. He is not ſuch an Epicurean Deity, as to ſequeſter himſelf wholly to the enjoiment of his own felicity, and to deſpiſe the concerns of poor mortals; but tho he have his *dwelling ſo high, yet he humbleth himſelf to behold the things in heaven and earth*, Pſalm 113. 5. Nor do's his providence confine it ſelf to the more ſplendid and greater parts of managery, the conduct of Empires and States, but it deſcends to the loweſt parts of his creation, to the *fowles* of the air, to the *lilies* of the field, and then ſure our Savior's inference as to mankind is irrefragable, *Are ye not much better then they*? Matt. 6. 26. If a ſparrow (as he elſewhere tells his diſciples) cannot fall to the ground without God's particular notice, ſurely no human creature is leſs conſiderable to him; nay if our very hairs are numbred, we cannot think the excreſcence is of more value than the ſtock, but muſt conclude that God with a particular advertence watches over the concerns of every man.

God is infinitly good, as well as omniſcient.

2. Now God being infinitly good, cannot thus attend us upon any inſidious deſign of doing us miſchief: he watches over us as a guardian, not as a ſpy; and directs his obſervation to the more ſeaſonable adapting his benefits. And as he is thus gracious in deſigning our advantage, ſo he is no leſs wiſe in contriving it. *All things*, ſays the wiſe man, *are not profitable for all men*, Ecclus. 37. 28. Indeed nothing is abſolutly good but God: all created things are good or ill in reference to that to which they are applied. Meat is good, but to a ſurfeited ſtomach 'tis not only nauſeous but dangerous. Fire is good, but if put in our boſoms, not only burns our cloths but fleſh. And as human wiſdom directs the right application of theſe and the like, ſo the ſupreme and divine orders events according to the diſpoſition of the perſon concern'd; *he knows our frame*, Pſalm 103. 14. and diſcerns what operation ſuch or ſuch things will have upon us, while we who know neither our ſelves nor them, can make but random gueſſes, and worſe choices. And ſure he that do's but thus in the general acknowledg God's providence, goodneſs and wiſdom (which he is no Chriſtian who do's not) has a ſufficient amulet againſt all his ſollicitudes, much more his repinings. He cannot think he ſuffers unawares to him who ſees all things. He cannot think his ſufferings are deſign'd for ill to him, becauſe they are diſpos'd by him who intends and projects his good. Nor can he fear thoſe intentions can miſcarry, which are guided by an infinit and unerring wiſdom, and backt by an uncontrolable power. And ſure this is as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* 6. 18. *ſtrong conſolation*, if we would but duely apply it.

3. Yet

3. Yet becauſe general notions do often make but light impreſſions on us, it may not be amiſs to make a little more inſpection, and to obſerve how applicable they are to the ſeveral kinds of our diſcontents. Now thoſe may be reduced to two: for either we are troubled at the want of ſomthing we deſire, or the ſuffering of ſomthing we would avert: ſo that the two notions of privative and poſitive divide between them all our affliction. *Our afflictions are either privative or poſitive.*

4. The firſt of theſe is uſually the moſt comprehenſive, for there are few who have not more torment from the apprehenſion of ſomwhat they want, than from the ſmart of any thing they feel. And indeed whilſt our deſires are ſo vagrant and exorbitant, they will be ſure to furniſh matter enough for our diſcontents. But certainly there is not in the world ſuch a charm for them, as the conſideration that God is more wiſe to diſcern, and more careful to provide what is really good for us than we our ſelves. We poor purblind creatures look only on the ſurface of things, and if we ſee a beautiful appearance, ſomwhat that invites our ſenſes, we court it with the utmoſt earneſtneſs; but God penetrates deeper, he ſees to the bottom both of us and thoſe things we deſire, and finds often that tho they may pleaſe our appetite, they will hurt our health: and will no more give them to us, than a careful father will to his child thoſe gilded poiſons he cries for. Perhaps this man is taken with the enchanting muſic of Fame, likes not his own obſcure ſtation, but would fain preſent himſelf upon a more public Theater, come into the eie and croud of the world; but how little do's he know how he ſhall act his part there: whether he ſhall come off with a plaudite or a hiſs? He may render himſelf but the more public ſpectacle of ſcorn; or if he do not that, he may by a better ſucceſs feed up his vain glory to ſuch a bulk, as may render him too great a weight for that tottering pinnacle whereon he ſtands: and ſo after he has made a towring circle, he may fall back with more ignominy to his firſt point. Another it may be no leſs eagerly deſires Wealth, thinks (as once *Cræſus* did) that he that abounds in treſure, cannot be emty of felicity; but alas how knows he how he ſhall employ it? There are two contrary temtations that attend riches; riots, and covetouſneſs: and he is ſure a little too confident, that dares promiſe himſelf that when there is ſuch odds againſt him, he ſhall certainly chuſe the one juſt mean: and if he do not, he do's only inflame his account at the great Audit. Beſides the more wealth he has, the fairer booty he is to the avarice of others; and it has bin often ſeen, that many a man had not died ſo poor, if he had lived leſs rich. Another perhaps thinks not himſelf ſo much to want wealth as children to heir it, and complains with *Abraham*, *Lord, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?* Gen. 15. 2. yet how knows he whether that child he ſo much deſires *ſhall be a wiſe man or a fool*, Eccl. 2. 19. a comfort or a vexation to himſelf if he live to ſee his proof? and if he do not, he do's but project for an acceſs to his dying cares in what hands to leave him. *Rachel* ſollicited this ſatisfaction with the greateſt impatience, *give me children or I die*, Gen. 30. 1. and 'tis obſervable that the grant of her wiſh proved the loſs of her life. *The privative is moſt unbounded.*

5. Thus in theſe and innumerable other inſtances we drive on blindfold, and very often impetuouſly purſue that which would ruin us: and were God as ſhort ſighted as we, into what precipices ſhould we minutely hurry our ſelves? or were he ſo unkind as to conſider our importunity more than our intereſt, we ſhould quickly ſink under the weight of our own wiſhes; and as *Juvenal* in his tenth Satyr excellently obſerves, periſh by the ſucceſs and grant of our Praiers. I ſuppoſe there is no man that ſober- *We generally make our ſelves miſerable for want of thoſe things whoſe poſſeſſion would make us miſerable.*

ly

ly recollects the events of his life, but can experimentally ſay, he has ſomtimes deſired things which would have bin to his miſchief if he had had them, and that himſelf has after lookt on the denial as a mercy: as on the other ſide when he has proſper'd in his aims, and had what his ſoul luſted after, it has bin but like the quailes to the *Iſraelites*, a conviction and puniſhment, rather than a ſatisfaction. And now ſurely God may complain of us as he did of *Iſrael*, *How long will it be ere you believe me?* Num. 14. 11. After all the atteſtations he has given of his care and Providence over us, after all the experiments we have had of the folly of our own elections, we cannot yet be brought either to diſtruſt our ſelves, or rely upon him. We will ſtill be chuſing, and look on him as no farther concern'd, than as the executioner of our deſigns.

We have a deference to every one beſide almighty God.

6. This is certainly a ſtrange perverſeneſs, and ſuch as no ſenſible man would be guilty of in any other inſtance. In all our ſecular affairs we truſt thoſe whom we have cauſe to think underſtand them better than our ſelves, and rely upon men in their own faculty. We put our eſtates in the Lawyer's hand, our bodies into the Phyſician's, and ſubmit to their advice tho it be againſt our humor, merely becauſe we account them more competent judges. Yet this deference we cannot be perſwaded to pay to God, but will ſtill be preſcribing to him, and are very angry if his diſpenſations do not exactly anſwer our fancies. And can we offer him a greater affront than thus to diſtruſt him? What is it but interpretatively to deny either his wiſdom, or his goodneſs, or both? and ſo derogate from him in two of his eſſential attributes. For there can be no rational account given by any who believe thoſe, why they ſhould not remit their whole concerns to him. So that the ſhort account is, that in our diſtruſts we either deny him to be God, or our ſelves to be men, by reſiſting the moſt evident dictates of that reaſon which diſtinguiſhes us from brutes. For certainly there is not in human diſcourſe a more irrefragable Maxim, than that we ought for our own ſakes to reſign our ſelves to him, who we are infallibly ſure, can, and will chuſe better for us, than we for our ſelves.

The light of nature taught Socrates to pray that God would give what he ſaw fit.

7. This was ſo apparent by mere natural light, that *Socrates* adviſed men to pray only for bleſſings in general, and leave the particular kinds of them to God's election, who beſt knows what is good for us. And ſure this is ſuch a piece of Divinity, as extremely reproches us Chriſtians, who cannot match a Heathen in his implicit faith to God. Nay indeed 'tis the vileſt defamation upon God himſelf, that we who pretend to know him more, ſhould truſt him leſs. So that we ſee our repinings do not terminate in their own proper guilt, but do in their conſequences ſwell higher, and our diſcontents propagate themſelves into Blaſphemy. For while we impatiently complain of our wants, we do tacitly tax God to want either that wiſdom, power, or love, whereby he ſhould ſupply us. And ſure he muſt be very Atheiſtical to whom this will not give a competent prejudice againſt this ſin.

Our poſitive afflictions are embitter'd by our ſelves.

8. And this very conſideration will equally prejudg the other branch of our diſcontents, I mean thoſe which repine at the ills we ſuffer. And not only our privative, but our poſitive afflictions may by it have their bitterneſs taken off: for the ſame goodneſs and wiſdom which denies thoſe things we like, becauſe they are hurtful for us, do's upon the very ſame reaſon give us thoſe diſtaſtful things which he ſees profitable. A wiſe Phyſician do's not only diet, but if occaſion be, purge his patient alſo. And ſurely there is not ſuch a purifier, ſuch a cleanſer of the ſoul as are afflictions,

if

if we do not (like diſorderly patients) fruſtrate their efficacy by the irregular managery of our ſelves under them.

SECT. VIII.

Of the Advantage of Afflictions.

1. IT were the work of a volume to give an exact and minute account of the benefit of afflictions. I ſhall only point at ſome of the more general and obvious. And firſt it is one of the moſt awakening calls to Repentance; and to this end it is that God moſt uſually deſigns it. We ſee the whole ſcene of it, Hoſ. 5. 15. *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledg their offence, and ſeek my face: in their affliction they will ſeek me early:* and in the very next verſe we find this voice of God echoed forth by a penitential note, *Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up.* Thus we find the Brethren of *Joſeph*, tho there had a long interval paſſed betwixt their barbarous uſage of him, and his feigned rigor to them, yet when they ſaw themſelves diſtreſs'd by the one, then they begin to recollect the other, ſaying; *We are verily guilty concerning our brother*, Gen. 42. 21. Proſperity is an intoxicating thing, and there are few brains ſtrong enough to bear it; it laies us a ſleep, and amuſes us with pleaſant dreams, whilſt in the mean time *Satan* rifles our treſures, and ſpoiles us by the deceitful charms of ſin of our innocency and real happineſs. And can there be a more friendly office don for a man in this condition, then to rouze him, and bring him to apprehend the deſigns that are laid againſt him? And this is the errand on which afflictions are ſent: ſo that we have reaſon to look on them as our friends and confederates that intend our reſcue, and to take the alarm they give us, and diligently ſeek out thoſe inteſtine enemies of which they warn us. And he that inſtead of this quarrels at their interpoſing, thinks them his *enemies becauſe they tell him the truth*, Gal. 4. 6. do's miſerably pervert *the counſel of God againſt himſelf*, Luke 7. 30. and may at laſt verify his own jealouſies; and by ſo provoking an ingratitude, convert thoſe into the wounds of an enemy, which were originally meant as the corrections of a Father.

The moſt general and obvious advantage of affliction, is its awakening to to repentance:

2. And as afflictions do thus in general admoniſh us of ſins, ſo it pleaſes God moſt frequently ſo to model and frame them, that they bear the very image and impreſs of thoſe particular guilts they are to chaſtiſe, and are the dark ſhadows that attend our gay delights, or flagrant inſolencies. The wiſe man obſerves that the turning the Egyptian waters into blood, was a manifeſt reproof of that cruel commandment for the murdering of the Hebrew infants, *Wiſd.* 12. 5. And ſurely we might in moſt if not all our ſufferings, ſee ſome ſuch correſponding circumſtances, as may lead us to the immediate provoking cauſe of it. God who do's all things in number, weight, and meſure, do's in puniſhments alſo obſerve a ſymmetry and proportion, and adapts them not only to the heinouſneſs, but even the very ſpecific kind of our crimes. The only fixt immutable rule he has given for his Vice-gerents on earth to puniſh by, is that in the caſe of murder, which is we ſee grounded on this rule of proportion, *He that ſheddeth mans blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed*, Gen. 9. 6. And tho he

Therefore they bear the image and impreſs of the guilts they are to chaſtiſe.

have now reſcinded the inferior retaliations of the *eie for the eie*, *the tooth for the tooth*, Exod. 21. 24. (probably for the hardneſs of our hearts, becauſe he ſaw our revengeful natures would be too much pleaſed with it) yet he has not precluded himſelf from acting by thoſe meſures, but we ſee he do's very often ſignally make men feel the ſmart of thoſe violences or injuſtices they have uſed to others. Of this the Sacred ſtory affords ſeveral examples (as *Adonibezeck*, Jud. 1. 6. and *Ahab*, 1 Kings 21. 19.) and profane many more, and daily experience and obſervation moſt of all. And tho this method of retaliation is not alwaies ſo evident and apparent to the world, becauſe mens ſins are not alwaies ſo, yet I believe if men would duly recollect, it would be for the moſt part diſcernable to their own conſciences, and they would apparently ſee, that their calamities did but trace the footſteps of their ſins.

It is of exceeding great importance to be taught, what is the ſin that God has a controverſy with us for.

3. Now if we rightly weigh this, we cannot but think it a very advantageous circumſtance. We are naturally blind when we look inward, and if we have not ſome adventitious light to clear the object, will be very apt to overlook it. Therefore ſince the end of all our afflictions is our repentance, it is a wiſe and gracious diſpoſal, that they do thus point to us thoſe particular ſins of which we are to repent. The body of ſin will not be deſtroied in the whole entire bulk, but muſt be diſmembred, pull'd to pieces limb by limb. He that attaques it otherwiſe, will be like *Sertorius*'s ſoldier, who ineffectively tugg'd at the horſes tail to get it off at once, when he that pull'd it hair by hair, quickly did it. Therefore as it is a great part of our ſpiritual Wiſdom to know in what eſpecial parts the *Sampſon*-like ſtrength of our corruptions lie, ſo it is a great inſtance of God's care of us, thus by his corrections to diſcipline and inſtruct us in it.

If the eſtate be impoveriſht, to conſider how it was gaind, or emploied; if the body be afflicted, to inquire if it be not the effect of intemperance; if the name be invaded, to reflect whither the ſhame be not deſerv'd, &c.

4. In all our afflictions therefore it is our concern, nicely and critically to obſerve them. I mean not to enhance our murmurs and complaints, but to learn by them what is Gods peculiar controverſy againſt us. This is indeed *to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Mich. 6. 9. Let him therefore that ſuffers in any of his concerns, examin whether he have not ſome correſponding guilt which anſwers to it, *as face anſwers face*, Prov. 27. 19. He that is impoveriſhed in his Eſtate, let him conſider firſt how he acquired it, whether there were not ſomthing of fraud or injuſtice, which like a cancrous humor, mixt in its very elements & conſtitution, and eat out its bowels: or whether ſome ſacrilegious prize, ſome coal from the altar have not fired his neſt. Or if nothing can be charged upon the acqueſt, let him conſider how he has uſed it; whether he have not made it the fuel of his luſts, in riot and exceſſes, or the object of his adoration in an inordinate value of it. In like manner he who is afflicted in his Body, groans under the torment of ſome grievous diſeaſe, may very ſeaſonably interrogate himſelf, whether it have not bin contracted by his vice, whether *his bones be not* (in a more literal ſenſe then *Job* meant it) *full of the ſins of his youth*, Job. 20. 11. and his ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs be not the cauſe, *that his ſoul*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *abhors all manner of meat, and is even hard at deaths door*, Pſal. 107. 18. or at leaſt whether the not employing his health and ſtrength to thoſe purpoſes for which 'twas given, is not the reaſon of its being withdrawn. He alſo that is invaded in his Reputation, that lies under ſome great infamy, is to conſider whether it be not deſerv'd; whether ſome part if not the whole guilt of which he is accuſed, ſtick not to him: or if he be clear in that particular inſtance, whether ſome conceled ſin of his would not if it were known, incur as great ſcandal: for in that caſe he has in right forfeited his reputation, and God may

may make the ſeizure as well by an unjuſt, as a juſt accuſation. Or if his heart accuſe him not here, yet let him farther reflect, whether his vain-glorious purſuits of praiſe and high conceits of himſelf, have not made this an apt and neceſſary humiliation for him. Or laſtly let him recollect how he has behaved himſelf towards others in this kind: whether he have had a juſt tenderneſs of his neighbors fame, or have not rather expoſed and proſtituted it. In theſe and many other inſtances ſuch a particular ſcrutiny, would (in all probability) diſcover the affinity and cognation between our guilts and our puniſhments, and by making out the ſpring and fountain head, direct us how to ſtop or divert the current. And he that would diligently employ himſelf in this inquiſition, would find little leiſure and leſs cauſe to condole his afflictions, but would divert all his complaints upon himſelf, *accept of the puniſhment of his iniquity, and thank the Lord for thus giving him warning*, Pſal. 16. 8.

Afflictions benefit us by weaning us from the world.

5. A ſecond benefit which God deſigns us in our afflictions is the weaning us from the world, to diſentangle us from its fetters and charms, and draw us to himſelf. We read in the ſtory of the *Deluge*, that ſo long as the earth was covered with waters, the very *Raven* was contented to take ſhelter in the Ark, but when all was fair and dry, even the *Dove* finally forſook it; *Gen.* 8. 12. And 'tis much ſo with us: the worſt of men will commonly in diſtreſſes have recourſe to God (the very heathen mariners in a ſtorm could rebuke *Jonah* for not calling upon his God, *Jon.* 1. 6.) when yet the very beſt of us, are apt to forget him amidſt the blandiſhments and inſinuations of proſperity. The kind aſpects of the world are very enchanting, apt to inveigle and beſot us, and therefore it is Gods care over us, to let us ſomtimes ſee her more averting countenance in her frowns and ſtorms; that, as children frighted by ſome ugly appearance, we may run into the arms of our father. Alas were all things exactly fitted to our humors here, when ſhould we think of a remove? and had not death ſome harbingers to prepare us for him, what a ſurpriſing gueſt would he be to us? 'Tis ſtoried of *Antigonus*, that ſeeing a ſoldier in his camp of ſo daring a courage, that he alwaies courted the moſt hazardous attemts, and obſerving him alſo of a very infirm ſickly habit, he took a particular care of him, and by medicines and good attendance recovered him; which no ſooner he had don, but the man grew more cautious, and would no longer expoſe himſelf as formerly; and gave this reaſon for it, that now he was healthy, his life was of ſome value to him, and not to be hazarded at the ſame rate, as when it was only a burden: and ſhould God cure all our complaints, render us perfectly at eaſe, I fear too many of us would be of the ſoldiers mind, think our lives too good to reſign to him, much more to hazard for him, as our Chriſtianity in many caſes obliges us. The ſon of *Syrach* obſerves how *dreadful death is to a man that is at reſt in his poſſeſſions, that hath abundance of all things, and hath nothing to vex him:* nay he deſcends much lower; and puts in him *who is yet able to receive meat*, Ecclus. 14. 1. The truth is we do ſo paſſionately dote upon the world, that like beſotted lovers, we can bear a great deal of ill uſage, before we quit our purſuit. Any little ſlight favor atones us after multiplied affronts, and we muſt be diſciplined by repeted diſappointments, ere we can withdraw our confidence. But how fatally ſecure ſhould we be, if God ſhould permit this Syren alwaies to entertain us with her muſic, and ſhould not by ſome diſcordant grating notes interrupt our raptures, and recall us to ſober thoughts.

This vouchsafement is so much the greater, in that the love of the world was a violation of the baptismal vow.

6. Indeed 'tis one of the higheſt inſtances of God's love, and of his clemency alſo, thus to project our reducement. We were all in our Baptiſm affianc'd to him, with a particular abrenunciation of the world, ſo that we cannot without the greateſt diſloialty caſt our ſelves into its embraces; and yet when we have thus *broken the covenant of God*, Prov. 2. 17. he do's not purſue us with a jealous rage, with the ſeverity which an abuſed rival'd kindneſs would ſuggeſt; doth not give us a bill of divorce and diſclame his relation; but contrives how he may reclame and bring us back to himſelf. The tranſcendency of this lenity God excellently deſcribes by the Prophet in the caſe of *Iſrael*, *They ſay if a man put away his wife, and ſhe become another mans, ſhall he return unto her again? but thou haſt plaied the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me ſaith the Lord*, Jer. 3. 1. And this tho a great height of indulgence, is no more then he daily repetes to us. After we have baſely adulterated with the world, converted our affections from God to it, he do's not give us over, abandon us to our leud courſe, and conſequent ruin, but ſtill invites our return; and leſt that may not ſerve, he do's with a great deal of holy artifice eſſay to break that accurſed League into which we are enter'd, pulls of the diſguiſe in which the world courted us, and makes us ſee it as it is in it ſelf, a ſcene of *vanity and vexation of ſpirit*, Eccles. 1. 14.

'Tis obſervable thoſe things are generally ſooneſt taken away which men are moſt fond of.

7. And as he do's this in general, ſo alſo with a particular application to thoſe temporal ſatisfactions wherewith we were moſt tranſported; the things to which we are more indifferent do not ſo much endanger us, 'tis thoſe upon which we have more vehemently ſet our hearts which become our ſnares, and awake his jealouſy; and accordingly we frequently ſee that 'tis in thoſe he chuſes to croſs us. How often do's it happen that thoſe which are enamoured of themſelves, dote upon their own features, do meet with ſome diſeaſe or accident which blaſts their beauty, withers that fair flower, and makes their winter overtake their ſpring? So in our friends and relations 'tis uſually ſeen, we ſooneſt loſe thoſe for whom we have the greateſt, the moſt immoderate paſſion. If there be one fondling among our children, 'tis odds but that is taken away, or made as much the object of our grief and ſorrow, as ever it was of our joy and love. When God ſees our hearts ſo exceſſively cleave to any tranſitory thing, he knows 'tis neceſſary to ſever them: for whilſt we have ſuch clogs upon us, *our ſouls will cleave to the duſt*, Pſal. 119. 1. will not be able to ſoar up to the higher region for which they are deſign'd.

And thoſe are generally the moſt hurtful things.

8. In a word, God ſo loves us, that he removes what ever he ſees will obſtruct that intimate union which he deſires with us: and ſure this is ſo obliging, that tho he ſhould bid us to our loſs, tho he could not recompence us for what he takes from us, yet we muſt be very ill natur'd if we can be angry at ſo much kindneſs. But when to this is added that all this is principally, nay ſolely deſign'd for our advantage, that God takes from us all theſe emty deluſory contentments merely that he may inſtate us in ſolid and durable joies; we betray as much ignorance of our intereſt, as inſenſibleneſs of our obligation, if we repine that God makes us ſo much his care. 'Tis true indeed, the things to which we have ſo inordinatly adhered, do ſtick ſo cloſe, that they cannot be pull'd away without ſome pain: yet for our corporal ſecurity we can endure the ſundring of parts that do not only cleave, but grow to us. He that has a grangren'd member ſuffers it to be cut off to ſave his whole body; and do's not revile, but thank and reward the Chirurgion. Yet where our ſouls are concern'd, and where the things have no native union with us, but are only cemented by our paſſions,

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we are impatient of the method, and think God deals very hardly with us, not to let us periſh with what we love. The ſum of all is this, God tho he be abundantly condeſcending, yet he will never ſtoop ſo low as to ſhare his intereſt with us in the world: if we will devote our ſelves to it, 'tis not all our emty forms of ſervice will ſatisfy him: if he cannot divorce our hearts from it, he will divorce himſelf eternally from us. And the caſe being thus, we are ſure very ill adviſed if we do not contentedly reſign our ſelves to his methods, and chearfully endure them how ſharp ſoever. The only expedient we have for our own eaſe, is to ſhorten the cure by giving our aſſiſtance, and not by ſtruglings to render it more difficult and painful. Let us entirely ſurrender our wills to him, and when we have don that, we may without much pain let him take any thing elſe. But the more difficult we find it to be diſentangled from the world, the greater ſhould our caution be againſt all future engagements to it. If our eſcape hath bin as the Apoſtle ſaies, *ſo as by fire*, Jude 23. with much ſmart and hazard, let us at leaſt have ſo much wit, as the common proverb allows children, and not again expoſe our ſelves: let us never glue our hearts to any external thing, but let all the concerns of the world hang looſe about us: by that means we ſhall be able to put them off inſenſibly when ever God calls for them, or perhaps we ſhall prevent his calling for them at all, it being for the moſt part our too cloſe adheſion to them which promts him to it.

9. A third advantage of afflictions is, that it is a mark and ſignature of our adoption, a witneſs of our legitimation. *What ſon is he* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *whom the Father chaſtiſeth not? but if ye be without chaſtiſement whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards and not ſons*, Heb. 12. 7, 8. *Jacob* clad his dearling *Joſeph* in a party-coloured Coat, and God's favorites do here wear a Livery inter-woven with a mixture of dark and gloomy colours; their *long white robes* are laid up for them againſt they come to the *marriage of the Lamb*, Rev. 19. 7. Indeed we much miſtake the deſign of Chriſtianity, if we think it calls us to a condition of eaſe and ſecurity. It might ſuit well enough with the votaries of the Golden Calf, to *ſit down to eat and drink, and riſe up to play*, Exod. 32. 6. but the diſciples of the crucified Savior are trained to another diſcipline, our profeſſion enters us into a ſtate of warfare: and accordingly our very Baptiſmal engagement runs all in military terms, and we are not only ſervants of Chriſt's family, but ſoldiers of his camp. Now we know in a war men muſt not expect to paſs their time in eaſe and ſoftneſs, but beſides all the dangers and difficulties of the combat, have many other hardſhips to endure; hunger and thirſt, heat and cold, hard lodgings and weary marches: and he that is too nice for thoſe, will not long ſtick to his colors. And it is the ſame in our Spiritual warfare, many preſſures and ſufferings are annexed to it, and our paſſive valor is no leſs tried than our active. In reſpect of this it is that our Savior admoniſhes his Proſelytes to compute firſt the difficulties incident to their profeſſion, and that he may not enſnare us by propoſing too eaſy terms, he bids us reckon upon the worſt, and tells us, that he *that forſakes not all that he hath, ſhall not be his diſciple*, Luke 14. 26. and *that we muſt thro much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, Acts 14. 22. Indeed 'twere very abſurd for us to expect eaſier conditions, when theſe are the ſame to which our Leader has ſubmitted, the *Captain of our Salvation was perfected by ſufferings*, Heb. 2. 10. and if *it behooved Chriſt to ſuffer before he enter'd into his glory*, Luke 24. 46. it were inſolent madneſs for us to look to be carried thither upon our beds of Ivory, or from the noiſe of our harps and viols, be immediatly rapt into the Choir of Angels.

Afflictions have a farther advantage, that they are a mark of adoption;

On this account pious men have ſtill looke upon proſperity with fear & jealouſy.

10. This has bin ſo much conſider'd by pious men, that they have lookt upon their ſecular proſperities with fear and jealouſy, and many have ſolemnly petition'd for croſſes, as thinking them the neceſſary atteſtation of their ſon-ſhip, and means of aſſimilation to their elder Brother. Why then ſhould that which was ſo deſirable to them, appear ſo formidable to us? or why ſhould we ſo vehemently deprecate, what they ſo earneſtly invited? If we indeed think it a privilege to be the Sons of God and fellow-heirs with Chriſt, why do we grudg at the condition? The *Roman* Captain tells St. *Paul* that he obtained the immunities of a *Roman with a great ſum*, Acts 22. 28. and ſhall we expect ſo much a nobler and more advantageous adoption perfectly *gratis*, look that God ſhould change his whole Oeconomy for our eaſe, give us an eternal inheritance diſcharged of thoſe temporal incumbrances himſelf has annexed to it? This were ſure as unjuſt a hope as it would be a vain one. When *David* had that enſnaring propoſal made him of being the Kings ſon in law, 1 *Sam.* 18. 21. he ſet ſuch a value upon the dignity, that he deſpiſed the difficulty of the condition: and ſure we muſt have very low abject ſouls, if when ſo infinitly a higher advancement is ſincerely offer'd us, we can ſuffer any apprehenſion of hardſhip to divert us. In a word let us remember that of the Apoſtle, *If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him*, 2. Tim. 2. 12. And tho our afflictions be in themſelves not joious but grievous, yet when they are conſider'd as the earneſt of our future inheritance, they put on another face, and may rather enamour than fright us.

Afflictions incite compaſſion.

11. A fourth advantage of afflictions is, that they excite our compaſſions towards others: there is nothing qualifies us ſo rightly to eſtimate the ſuffering of others, as the having our ſelves felt them: without this our apprehenſions of them are as dull and confuſed, as a blind man of color, or a deaf man of ſounds. They *that ſtretch themſelves upon their couches, that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midſt of the ſtall: that chaunt to the ſound of the viol, drink wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief ointments, will not much be grieved with the afflictions of Joſeph.* Am. 6. 4, 5, 6. Nay ſo neceſſary is our experience towards our commiſeration, that we ſee 'twas thought a requiſite accompliſhment of our high Prieſt, (that higheſt example of unbounded compaſſion) and therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *It behooved him in all things to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Prieſt in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people, for in that he himſelf hath ſuffer'd being temted, he is able alſo to ſuccour them that are temted*, Heb. 2. 17, 18. But if he whoſe mere ſenſe of our miſeries brought him down to us, choſe this expedient to advance his pity, how neceſſary is it to our petrified bowels? And ſince God has aſſign'd our mercies to our brethren, as the ſtandard by which he will proportion his to us, 'tis more ours than their advantage to have them enlarged: ſo that when by making us taſt of their cup, acquainting us with the bitter reliſh of their ſufferings, he prepares us to a Chriſtian ſympathy with them, 'tis but a remoter way of obliging and qualifying us for a more ample portion of his mercy. Nay beſides the profit there is honor accrues to us by it; compaſſion is one of the beſt properties of our nature, and we unman our ſelves when we put it off; nay more, 'tis an Attribute of the Divinity, and the more we advance in it, the cloſer approches we make to him. And therefore we have all reaſon to bleſs him for that diſcipline by which he promotes us in ſo excellent, ſo neceſſary a grace.

12. A

12. A fifth benefit of afflictions, is that it is an improvement of devotion, ſets us with more heartineſs to our praiers. Whilſt proſperity flows in upon us, we bathe our ſelves in its ſtreams, but are very apt to forget its ſource; ſo that God is fain to ſtop the current, leave us dry and parched that our needs may make us do what our gratitude would not, trace our bleſſings up to the original ſpring, and both acknowledg and invoke him as the Author of all our good. This effect of afflictions is obſerv'd by the Prophet, *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a praier when thy chaſtning was upon them*, Iſa. 26. 16. And I believe I may appeal to every man's experience whether his praiers be not more frequent and more hearty too, when he is under ſome diſtreſs. Then how importunate are we in our petitions? how profuſe in our vows and promiſes? ſaying with *Iſrael, deliver us only, we pray thee, this day: and they put away the ſtrange Gods from among them, and ſerved the Lord*, Jud. 10. 15, 16. I confeſs 'tis no good indication of our temper that we need thus to be put in the preſs ere we will yield any thing, yet ſince we are ſo diſingenuous, 'tis a mercy in God to adapt his methods to us; to extort when we will not give, and if he can have no free-will offerings, yet at leaſt to exact his tribute. Nor do's he deſign the effect of this ſhould ceaſe with the calamity that rais'd it, but expects our compell'd addreſſes ſhould bring us into the way of voluntary ones, and happily enſnare us into piety. And indeed herein are we worſe than bruti ſh if it do not. We think it a barbarous rudeneſs to engage a man in our affairs, and as ſoon as we have ſerved our own turns, never take farther notice of him. Nay indeed the very beaſts may lecture us in this piece of Morality, many of them paying a ſignal gratitude where they have received benefits, and ſhall we not come up at leaſt to their pitch? ſhall not the endearment of our deliverance bring our deliverer into ſome repute and conſideration with us, and make us deſire to keep up an acquaintance & entercourſe with him? Yet if ingenuity work not with us, let intereſt at leaſt prevail, and the remembrance how ſoon we may need him again, admoniſh us not to make our ſelves ſtrangers to him. God complains of *Iſrael, wherefore ſay my people, we are Lords? we will come no more at thee*, Jer. 2. 31. A very inſolent folly to renounce that dependance by which alone they ſubſiſted, & no leſs will it be in any of us if we ſtop our recourſe to him, becauſe we have had advantage by it. We have no aſſurance that the ſame occaſion ſhall not recur, but with what face can we then reſume that entercourſe which in the interval we deſpiſed? So that if we have but any ordinary providence we ſhall ſtill ſo celebrate paſt reſcues as to continue in a capacity of begging more, and then we cannot but alſo confeſs the benefit of thoſe firſt calamities which inſpirited our devotion, and taught us to pray in earneſt, & will be aſhamed that our thanks ſhould be utter'd in a fainter accent than our petitions; or our daily ſpiritual concerns ſhould be more coldly ſollicited than our temporal accidental ones.

Afflictions improve devotion.

13. Nor is it only our devotion that is thus improved by our diſtreſſes, but many other Graces; our Faith, our Hope, our Patience, our Chriſtian Sufferance and fortitude. It is no triumph of Faith to truſt God for thoſe good things which he gives us in hand, this is rather to walk by ſenſe than Faith, but to rely on him in the greateſt deſtitution, *and againſt hope to believe in hope*; this is the Faith of a true child of *Abraham*, & will *be imputed* to us (as it was to him) *for righteouſneſs*, Rom. 4. 23. So alſo our Patience owes all its opportunities of exerciſe to our afflictions, and conſequently owes alſo a great part of its being to them; for we know deſuetude will loſe habits. What imaginable uſe is there of patience, where there is nothing

Afflictions improve Chriſtian graces.

thing to ſuffer? In our proſperous ſtate, we may indeed employ our temperance, our humility, our caution; but patience ſeems then a uſeleſs vertue: nay indeed for ought we know may be counterfeit, till adverſity bring it to the teſt. And yet this is the moſt glorious accompliſhment of a Chriſtian, that which moſt eminently conforms him to the Image of his Savior, whoſe whole life was a perpetual exerciſe of this grace; and therefore we love our eaſe too well if we are unwilling to buy this pearl at any price.

Afflictions teach to be thankful both for paſt benefits, and even incumbent preſſures.

14. Laſtly our Thankfulneſs is (at leaſt ought to be) increas'd by our diſtreſſes. 'Tis very natural for us to reflect with value and eſteem upon thoſe bleſſings we have loſt, and we too often do it to aggravate our diſcontent: but ſure the more rational uſe of it is to raiſe our thankfulneſs for the time wherein we enjoied them. Nay not only our former enjoiments, but even our preſent deprivations deſerve our gratitude, if we conſider the happy advantages we may reap from them. If we will perverſly caſt them away, that unworthy contemt paies no ſcores; for we ſtill ſtand anſwerable in God's account for the good he deſign'd and we might have had by it, and we become liable to a new charge for our ingratitude in thus *deſpiſing the chaſtiſement of the Lord*, Heb. 12. 5.

Secular misfortunes have bin the paſſage to ſucceeding felicities.

15. And now if all theſe benefits of afflictions (which are yet but imperfectly recited) may be thought worth conſidering, it cannot but reconcile us to the ſharpeſt of God's methods; unleſs we will own our ſelves ſuch mere animals, as to have no other apprehenſions than what our bodily ſenſes convey to us; for ſure he that has reaſon enough to underſtand that he has an immortal ſoul, cannot but aſſent that its intereſts ſhould be ſerved, tho with the diſplacency of his fleſh. Yet even in regard of that, our murmurings are oft very unjuſt; for we do many times ignorantly prejudg God's deſigns towards us even in temporals, who frequently makes a little tranſient uneaſineſs the paſſage to ſecular felicities. *Moſes* when he fled out of *Egypt*, probably little thought that he ſhould return thither a *God unto Pharoah*, Exod. 4. 16. and as little did *Joſeph* when he was brought thither a ſlave, that he was to be a Ruler there: yet as diſtant as thoſe ſtates were, the Divine Providence had ſo connected them, that the one depends upon the other. And certainly we may often obſerve the like over-ruling hand in our own diſtreſſes, that thoſe events which we have entertained with the greateſt regret, have in the conſequences bin very beneficial to us.

Be afflictions what they can be, they in ſome reſpect or other are deſign'd for good.

16. To conclude, we have certainly both from ſpeculation and experience abundant matter to calm all our diſquiets, to ſatisfy our diſtruſts, and to fix in us an entire reſignation to God's diſpoſals, who has deſigns which we cannot penetrate, but none which we need fear, unleſs we our ſelves pervert them. We have our Savior's word for it, that *he will not give us a ſtone when we ask bread, nor a ſcorpion when we ask a fiſh*, Matt. 7. 9. Nay his love ſecures us yet farther from the errors of our own wild choice, and do's not give us thoſe ſtones and ſcorpions which we importune for. Let us then leave our concerns to him who beſt knows them, and make it our ſole care to entertain his diſpenſations with as much ſubmiſſion and duty, as he diſpences them with love and wiſdom. And if we can but do ſo, we may dare all the power of earth and hell too to make us miſerable: for be our afflictions what they can, we are ſure they are but what we in ſome reſpect or other need; be they privative or poſitive, the want of what we wiſh, or the ſuffering of what we wiſh not, they are the diſpoſals of him who cannot err, and we ſhall finally have cauſe to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *It is good for me that I have bin afflicted*, Pſalm 119. 71.

SECT.

Sect. IX.

Of our Misfortunes compared with other mens.

1. WE come now to impreſs an equally juſt and uſeful conſideration, the comparing our misfortunes with thoſe of other mens: and he that do's that, will certainly ſee ſo little cauſe to think himſelf ſingular, that he will not find himſelf ſuperlative in calamity; for there is no man living that can with reaſon affirm himſelf to be the very unhappieſt man, there being innumerable diſtreſſes of others which he knows not of, and conſequently cannot bring them in balance with his own. A multitude of men there are whoſe perſons he knows not, and even of thoſe he do's, he may be much a ſtranger to their diſtreſſes; many ſorrows may lie at the heart of him who carries a ſmiling face, and many a man has bin an object of envy to thoſe who look but on the ſurface of his ſtate, who yet to thoſe who know his private griefs, appears more worthy of compaſſion. And ſure this confuſed uncertain eſtimate of other mens afflictions, may divert us from all loud out-cries of our own. *Solon* ſeeing a friend much oppreſt with grief, carried him up to a town that overlookt the City of *Athens*, and ſhewing him all the buildings, ſaid to him, conſider how many ſorrows have, do, and ſhall in future ages inhabit under all thoſe roofs, and doe not vex thy ſelf with thoſe inconveniences which are common to mortality, as if they were only yours. And ſure 'twas good advice: for ſuffering is almoſt as inſeparable an adjunct of our nature, as dying is: yet we do not ſee men very apt to imbitter their whole lives by the fore-ſight that they muſt die, but ſeeing it a thing as univerſal as inevitable, they are more forward to take up the Epicures reſolution, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*, 1 Cor. 15. 32. And why ſhould we not look upon afflictions alſo as the common lot of humanity, and as we take the advantages, ſo be content to bear the incumbrances of that ſtate?

No man can reaſonably think himſelf more unhappy then his neighbour.

2. But beſides that implicite allowance that is thus to be made for the unknown calamities of others, if we ſurvey but thoſe that lie open and viſible to us, the moſt of us ſhall find enough to diſcountenance our complaints. Who is there that when he has moſt ſtudiouſly recollected his miſeries, may not find ſome or other that apparently equals, if not exceeds him? He that ſtomacs his own being contemn'd and ſlighted, may ſee another perſecuted and oppreſt. He that groans under ſome ſharp pain, may ſee another afflicted with ſharper: and even he that has the moſt acute torments in his body, may ſee another more ſadly cruciated by the agonies of his mind. So that if we would but look about us, we ſhould ſee ſo many forreign occaſions of our pity, that we ſhould be aſham'd to confine it wholly to our ſelves.

Other mens equal ſhare in calamity, is not only a poſſibility, but often a viſible certainty.

3. It will perhaps be ſaid that this cannot be univerſally true, for that there muſt in comparative degrees be ſome loweſt ſtate of miſery: I grant it, but ſtill that ſtate conſiſts not in ſuch an indiviſible point, that any one perſon can have the incloſure; or if it do, 'twill be ſo hard for any to diſcern who that one perſon is, that I need deſire no fairer a compoſition, then to have every man ſuſpend his repinings, till he can evince his title. But alas there are but few that can make any approches to ſuch a pretence: for tho if we advert to mens complaints, we ſhould think all degrees of compariſon were confounded, and every man were equally the greateſt

The remarkably unhappy are the leſs number of men: but 'tis for little things moſt men complain.

ſufferer; yet certainly in the truth of things 'tis nothing ſo: for (not to repete what was before mention'd, that probably no man is miſerable in any proportion to the utmoſt degree of poſſibility) the remarkably unhappy are far the leſſe number. And how paſſionatly ſoever men exaggerate their calamities, yet perhaps in their ſober mood, they will ſcarce change ſtates with thoſe whom they profeſs to think more happy then themſelves. It was the ſaying of *Socrates*, that if there were a common bank made of all mens troubles, moſt men would rather chuſe to take thoſe they brought, then to venter upon a new dividend. And indeed he had reaſon for his ſuppoſition; for conſidering how great a part of many men's afflictions are of their own making, fictitious and imaginary, they may juſtly fear leaſt they ſhould exchange feathers for lead, their own emty ſhadows for the real and preſſing calamities of others, and cannot but think it beſt to ſit down with their own, which ſerves their declamations as well, and their eaſe much better. We oft ſee men at a little mis-ſhaping of a garment, a ſcarce diſcernable error in their cook, or their ſhorteſt interruption in their ſports, in ſuch tranſports of trouble, as if they were the moſt unfortunate men in the world; yet for all that you ſhall hardly perſwade them to change with him whoſe courſe clothings ſuperſedes all care of the faſhion, whoſe appetite was never diſappointed for want of ſawce, and whoſe perpetual toil makes him inſenſible what the defeat of ſport ſignifies.

We know the utmoſt of the ills we ſuffer, and would not willingly change our condition with another.

4. Nay even where the exchange ſeems more equal, where the afflictions are on both ſides ſolid and ſubſtantial, yet a prudent man would ſcarce venture upon the barter. 'Tis no ſmall advantage to know what we have to conteſt with, to have experimented the worſt of its attaques, by which we become better able to guard our ſelves: but a new evil comes with the force of a ſurpriſe, and finds us open and diſarmed. It is indeed almoſt a miraculous power that cuſtom has in reconciling us to things otherwiſe diſpleaſing; all our ſenſes are thought to remit of their averſion by familiarity with ungratefull objects: that ugly form which at firſt makes us ſtart, by uſe deveſts its terror, and we reconcile our ſelves to harſh ſounds and ill reliſhes by long cuſtom. And ſure it has the very ſame effect upon our minds: the moſt fierce calamities do by acquaintance grow more tractable; ſo that he that exchanges an old one for a new, do's but bring a wild Lion into his houſe inſtead of a tame: it may for ought he knows immediatly tear him in pieces, but at leaſt muſt coſt him a great deal of pains to render it gentle and familiar, and certainly no wiſe man would wiſh to make ſuch a bargain.

Affliction is like a public Tax, a ſhare in which every one muſt be content to bear.

5. By all this it appears that how extravagantly ſoever we aggravate our own calamities and extenuate other mens, we dare not upon recollection ſtand to our own eſtimate: & what can be ſaid more in prejudice of our diſcontents? 'Tis a granted maxim, that every man muſt have afflictions. *Man that is born of a woman*, ſaies *Job*, *is of few years, and full of trouble*, Job 13.4. and we muſt reverſe Gods fundamental law, before we can hope for a total exemtion. All that any man can aſpire to, is to have but an equal ſhare with others, and the generality of men have ſo, at leaſt none can prove he has not ſo; and till he can, his murmurs will ſure be very unjuſtifiable, eſpecially when they have this convincing circumſtance againſt them, that he dares not upon ſober thoughts change his afflictions with moſt of his neighbors. He is an ill member of community, who in public aſſeſſments would ſhuffle off all paiments: and he is no better who in this common tax God has laid upon our nature, is not content to bear his ſhare.

6. And

6. And truly would we but consider that in all our sufferings nothing befals us but what is common to our kind, nay which is extreamly exceeded by many within the verge of our own observation, we must be senseleſsly partial to be impatient. The Apostle thought it a competent consolation for the first Christians, that *there had no tentation befallen them but what was common to men*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. and we betray very extravagant opinions of our selves if it be not so to us. Indeed 'twas scarce possible for us to be so unsatisfied, as the greatest part of us are, did we in the comparing our selves with others, proceed with any tolerable ingenuity. *'Tis injustice and partiality to expect to be exemted.*

7. But alas we are very fallacious and deceitful in the point, we do not compare the good of others with our good, nor their evil with our evil; but with an envious curiosity we amass together all the desireable circumstances of our neighbors condition, and with as prying discontent we ransack all our grievances, and confront to them. This is so unsincere a way of proceeding, as the most ordinary understanding can detect. If I should wager that my arm were longer then another mans, and for trial mesure my arm with his finger, he must be stupidly silly, that should award for me; and yet this were not a grosser cheat, then that which we put upon our selves in our comparisons with others. And 'tis a little strange to observe unto what various purposes we can apply this one thin piece of Sophistry: for when we compare our neighbors and our selves in point of morality, we do but reverse the fallacy, and presently make his vices as much exceed ours, as our calamities did his in the other instance. They are indeed both great violences to reason and justice, yet the later is sure the pleasanter kind of deceit. A man has some joy in thinking himself less wicked then his neighbor, but what imaginable comfort can he take in thinking himself more miserable? Certainly he that would submit to a cousenage, had much better shift the scene, and think his sufferings less then they are, rather then more; for since opinion is the thing that usually sets an edge upon our calamities, it might be a profitable deceit that could steal that from us. *The common way of comparing conditions, is fallacious.*

8. But we need not blindfold our selves if we would but use our eies aright, and see things in their true shapes; and if we did thus, what a strange turn would there be in the common estimates of the world? How many of the gilded troubles of greatness, which men at a distance look on with so much admiration and desire, would then be as much contemned as now they are courted? A competency would then get the better of abundance, and the now envied pomp of Princes, when balanced with the cares and hazards annext, would be so far from a bait, that men like *Saul* 1 *Sam.* 10. 22. would *hide themselves* from the preferment; and he that understood the weight, would rather chuse to weild a Flaile then a Scepter; yet so childishly are we besotted with the glittering appearance of things, that we conclude felicity must needs dwell where there is a magnificent Portico, and being possest with this fancy we over-look her in our own humbler Cottages, where she would more constantly reside, if she could but find us at home: but we are commonly engag'd in a rambling pursuit of her where she is seldomest to be found, and in the interim miss of her at our own doors. *We take glittering misery for real happiness.*

9. Indeed there is scarce a greater folly or unhappiness incident to mans nature, then this fond admiration of other mens enjoiments, & contemt of our own. And whilst we have that humour, it will supplant not only our present, but all possibilities of our future content. For tho we could draw to our selves all those things for which we envy others, we should have no *While we admire the false enjoiments of others, we contemn our own real blessings.*

ſooner made them our own, then they will grow deſpicable and nauſeous to us. This is a ſpeculation which has bin atteſted by innumerable experiments, there being nothing more frequent, then to ſee men with impatient eagerneſs, nay often with extreme hazards purſue thoſe acqueſts, which when they have them, they are immediatly ſick of. There is ſcarce any man that may not give himſelf inſtances of this in his own particular: and yet ſo fatally ſtupid are we, that no defeats will diſcipline us, or take us off from theſe falſe eſtimates of other mens happineſſes. And truly while we ſtate our compariſons ſo unequally, they are as miſchievous as the common proverb ſpeaks them odious: but if we could begin at the right end, and look with as much compaſſion on the adverſities of our brethren, as we do with envy on their proſperities, every man would find cauſe to ſit down contentedly with his own burden, and confeſs that he bears but the proportionable ſhare of his common nature, unleſs perhaps it be where ſome extraordinary demerits of his own have added to the weight; and in that caſe he has more reaſon to admire his afflictions are ſo few, then ſo many. And certainly every man knows ſo many more ills by himſelf, then it is poſſible for him to do by another, that he that really ſees himſelf exceed others in his ſufferings, will find cauſe enough to think he do's in ſins alſo.

The Patriarchs and other great examples of vertue in Scripture had great domeſtic misfortunes.

10. But if we ſtretch the compariſon beyond our contemporaries, and look back to the generations of old, we ſhall have yet farther cauſe to acknowledge Gods great indulgence to us. *Abraham* tho the friend of God was not exemted from ſevere trials; he was firſt made to wander from his Country, and betake himſelf to a kind of vagrant life, was a long time ſuſpended from the bleſſing of his deſired off-ſpring; and when at laſt his beloved *Iſaac* was obtained, it cauſed a domeſtic jarre, which he was fain to compoſe by the expulſion of *Iſhmael* tho his ſon alſo. But what a conteſt may we think there was in his own bowels when that rigorous task was impoſed on him of ſacrificing his *Iſaac?* and tho his faith glorioufly triumpht over it, yet ſure there could not be a greater preſſure upon human nature. *David* the man after Gods own heart is no leſs ſignal for his afflictions then for his piety: he was for a great while an exile from his Countrey, and (which he moſt bewailed) from the Sanctuary by the perſecutions of *Saul:* and after he was ſetled in that throne to which Gods immediate aſſignation had intitled him, what a ſucceſſion of calamities had he in his own family? the inceſtuous rape of his Daughter, the retaliation of that by the as unnatural murder of *Amnon*, and that ſeconded by another no leſs barbarous conſpiracy of *Abſolom* againſt himſelf; his expulſion from *Jeruſalem*, the baſe revilings of *Shimei*, and finally the loſſe of that dearling ſon in the act of his ſin. A cluſter of afflictions in compariſon whereof the moſt of ours are but like the *gleanings* (as the Prophet ſpeaks) *after the vintage is don.* It were indeed endleſs to inſtance in all the ſeveral Fore-fathers of our Faith before *Chriſts* incarnation: the Apoſtle gives us a brief, but very comprehenſive compendium of their ſufferings, *They had trial of cruel mockings and ſcourgings; yea moreover, of bonds and impriſonments: they were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder, were temted, were ſlain with the ſword: they wandred about in ſheep-skins, and goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: they wandred in deſerts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth*, Heb. 11. 36, 37, 38. And if we look on the Primitive Chriſtians, we ſhall ſee them perfectly the counterpart to them, their privileges conſiſted not in any immunities from calamities; for their whole lives were ſcenes of ſufferings. St. *Paul* gives us an account of his

his own, *in labors more abundant, in ſtripes above meſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft: of the Jews five times received I forty ſtripes ſave one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffer'd ſhipwrack, a night and a day have I bin in the deep, in journying often*, &c. 2 Cor. 11. 23. and if his ſingle hardſhips roſe thus high, what may we think the whole ſum of all his fellow-laborers amounted to together, with that noble Army of Martyrs, who ſealed their faith with their blood; of whoſe ſufferings *Eccleſiaſtic* hiſtory gives us ſuch aſtoniſhing relations?

Above all, the Author and Finiſher of our faith, our Lord Jeſus, was exercis'd in ſufferings.

11. And now *being compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes*, the Apoſtle's inference is very irrefragable, *let us run with patience the race which is ſet before us*, Heb. 12. 1, 2. But yet it is more ſo, if we proceed on to that conſideration he adjoins, *Looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him, endur'd the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame.* Indeed if we contemplate him in the whole courſe of his life, we ſhall find him rightly ſtiled by the Prophet *a man of ſorrows*, Iſa. 53. 3. And as if he had charged himſelf with all our griefs as well as our ſins, there is ſcarce any human calamity which we may not find exemplified in him. Do's any complain of the lowneſs and poverty of his condition? Alas his whole life was a ſtate of indigence: he was forced to be an inmate with the beaſts, be laid in a ſtable at his birth, and after himſelf profeſſes that he *had not where to lay his head*, Luke 9. 58. Is any oppreſt with infamy and reproch? he may ſee his Savior accus'd as a *glutton and a wine-bibber*, Luke 7. 34. *a Blaſphemer*, John 10. 33. *a Sorcerer*, Matt. 12. 24. *a perverter of the nation*, Luke 23. 2. Yea to ſuch a ſordid lowneſs had they ſunk his repute, that a ſeditious thief and murderer was thought the more eligible perſon, *not this man but Barabbas*, John 18. 40. And finally all this ſcene of indignities clos'd with the ſpightful pageantry of *mockery* acted by the ſoldiers, *Matt.* 27. 28. and the yet more barbarous inſultings of Prieſts and Scribes, verſe 41. Is any man deſpiſed or deſerted by his friends? he was contemned by his country-men, thought frantic by his friends, betraied by one of his diſciples, abandon'd by all, unleſs that one who followed him longeſt, to renounce him the moſt ſhamefully by a three-fold abjuration. Nay what is infinitly more than this, he ſeem'd deſerted by God alſo, as is witneſſed by that doleful exclamation, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Mark 15. 34. Is any diſſatisfied with the hard-ſhips or laborioufneſs of his life? let him remember his Savior's was not a life of delicacy or eaſe: he was never enter'd in thoſe Academies of luxury, where men are *gorgeouſly apparell'd and live delicately*, Luke 7. 25. but he was brought up under the mean roof of a Carpenter, & conſequently ſubjected to all the lowneſs of ſuch an education. His initiation to his Prophetic office was with the miraculous ſeverity of a fourty daies faſt, and in his diſcharge of it, we find him in perpetual labors, *going about doing good*, Acts 10. 38. and that not in triumph, like a Prince beſtowing his largeſſes, but in weary perigrinations, never riding but once, and that only upon a borrow'd beaſt, *and to fulfil a prophecy*, Matt. 21. 4. Do's any man groan under ſharp and acute pains? let him conſider what his Redeemer endur'd, how in his infancy at his circumciſion he offer'd the firſt fruits, as an earneſt of that bloody vintage when *he trod the wine-preſs alone*, Iſaiah 63. 3. Let him attend him thro all the ſtages of his direful paſſion, and behold his arms pinion'd with rough cords, his head ſmote with a reed, and torn with his crown of thorns, his back ploughed with thoſe *long furrows* (Pſalm 120. 3.) the ſcourges had made; his macerated feeble body oppreſt with the weight of his croſs, and at laſt rackt and extended on it;

his hands and feet, those nervous and consequently most sensible parts transfixt with nails, his whole body fastned to that accursed tree, and exposed naked to the air in a cold season; his throat parched with thirst, and yet more afflicted with that vinegar and gall wherewith they pretended to relieve him; and finally his life expiring amidst the full sense of these accurate torments. Lastly do's any man labor under the bittereſt of all sorrows, importunate temtations to, or a wounded spirit for sin? even here also he may find that he has an *high Priest who hath bin touched with the sense of his infirmities*, Heb.4.15. He was violently assaulted with a succession of temtations, *Matt.* 4. and we cannot doubt but Satan would on him employ the utmost of his skill. Nor was he less oppresst with the burden of sin, (ours I mean, tho not his own.) What may we think were his apprehensions in the Garden, when he so earnestly deprecated that which was his whole errand into the world? What a dreadful pressure was that which wrung from him that bloody sweat, and cast him into that inexplicable agony, the horror whereof was beyond the comprehensions of any but his who felt it? And finally how amazing was the sense of Divine wrath, which extorted that stupendous complaint, that *strong cry* on the cross, *Heb.* 5.7. the sharp accent whereof, if it do aright sound in our hearts, must certainly quite overwhelm our loudest groans? And now certainly I may say with *Pilate, Ecce homo*, behold the man; or rather with a more Divine Author, Behold *if ever there were sorrows like unto his sorrows*, Lam. 1. 12.

'Tis most reasonable to expect, that what was don in the green tree, should be don in the dry.

12. And sure it were but a reasonable inference, that which we find made by Christ himself, *if these things be don in a green tree, what shall be don in the dry?* Luke 23.31. If an imputative guilt could nourish so scorching a flame, pull down so severe a wrath; what can we expect, who are merely made up of combustible matter, whose proper personal sins cry for vengeance? Sure were we to judge by human measures, we should reckon to have more than a double portion of our Savior's sufferings entail'd upon us: yet such is the efficacy of his, that they have commuted for ours, and have left us only such a share, as may evidence our relation to our crucified Lord: such as may serve only for badges and cognizances to whom we retain. For alas, let the most afflicted of us weigh our sorrows with his, how absurdly unequal will the comparison appear? And therefore as the best expedient to baffle our mutinies, to shame us out of our repinings, let us often draw this uneven parallel, confront our petty uneasinesses with his unspeakable torments; and sure 'tis impossible but our admiration and gratitude must supplant our impatiences.

'Tis a criminal niceness not to be willing to follow the Captain of our Salvation.

13. This is indeed the method to which the Apostle directs us, *Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, least ye be weary and faint in your minds: ye have not yet resisted unto blood*, Heb. 12. 3,4. Was he contradicted, and shall we expect to be humor'd and compli'd with? Did he resist to blood, & shall we think those pressures intolerable, which force only a few tears from us? This is such an unmanly niceness, as utterly makes us unfit to follow the Captain of our Salvation. What a soldier is he like to make, that will take no share of the hazards and hardships of his General? Honest *Uriah* would not take the lawful solaces of his own house, upon the consideration that his *Lord Joab* (tho but his fellow subject) *lay incamped in the open fields*, 2 Sam. 11. 11. yea tho he was sent by him from the Camp. And shall we basely forsake ours in pursuit of our ease? He is of a degenerous spirit, whom the example of his Superior will not animate. *Plutarch* tells us, that *Cato* marching thro the deserts, was so distrest for water, that a small quantity was brought to him in a helmet

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as a great prize, which he refuſing becauſe he could not help his ſoldiers to the like, they were ſo tranſported with that generoſity, that it extinguiſht the ſenſe of their thirſt, and they were aſhamed to complain of what their Leader voluntarily endur'd for their ſakes. And ſurely we extremely diſcredit our inſtitution, if we cannot equal their ingenuity, & follow ours with as great alacrity thro all the difficulties he has trac'd before us, & for us.

The exemplary practice of holy men takes away the excuſe of humane frailty.

14. Nor let us think to excuſe our ſelves upon the impotency of our fleſh, which wants the aſſiſtance which his Divinity gave him: for that plea is ſuperſeded by the fore-mention'd examples of the Saints, men of like paſſions with us, who not only patiently, but joifully endur'd all tribulations; by which it appears it is not impoſſible to our nature, with thoſe aids of grace which are common to us with them: for certainly the difference between them & us is not ſo much in the degrees of the aids, as in the diligence of employing them. Let us therefore, as the Apoſtle adviſes, *lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*, Heb. 12. 12. and with a noble emulation follow thoſe heroic patterns they have ſet us. And ſince wee ſee that even thoſe Favorites of heaven, have ſmarted ſo ſeverely, let us never dream of an immunity; but when ever we find our ſelves inclining to any ſuch flattering hope, let every one of us upbraid our ſelves in thoſe terms the *Jews* did our Savior, *Art thou greater than Abraham, and the Prophets, whom makeſt thou thy ſelf?* John 8. 53. Nay we may deſcend lower and take in not only all the inferior Saints of former times, but all thoſe our contemporaries in ſufferings, which are moſt within our view, & may ask the Apoſtle's queſtion, *what then? are we better than they?* Rom. 3. 9. If we think we are, 'tis certain we are ſo much worſe by that inſolence; & if we confeſs we are not, upon what ſcore can we pretend to be better treated? To conclude, let us not pore only upon our peculiar evils, but attentively look about us, and conſider what others endure: and ſince in frolics we can ſport our ſelves with many uneaſineſſes for company ſake, let us not be more puſillanimous in our ſoberer moods, but every man chearfully take his turn in bearing the common burden of mortality, till we put off both it and its appendages together, *when this mortal ſhall put on immortality*, 1 Cor. 15. 54.

SECT. X.

Of particular Aids for the gaining of Contentment.

To general conſideration particular will uſefully ſucceed.

1. WE have now paſt thro all thoſe conſiderations we at firſt propos'd, and may truſt the conſidering Reader to make his own collections: yet becauſe impatience is the vice that has bin all this while arraigned, I am to fore-ſee it poſſible, that thoſe who have the greateſt degree of that, may be the leaſt willing to attend the whole proceſs, and therefore I think it may not be amiſs, for their eaſe to ſuit and reduce all into ſome ſhort directions and rules for the acquiring contentment.

The firſt direction is to have a low opinion of ones ſelf.

2. The firſt and moſt fundamental is, the mortifying our Pride, which as it is the ſeminary of moſt ſins, ſo eſpecially this of repining. Men that are highly opinion'd of themſelves are commonly unſatisfiable: for how well ſoever they are treated, they ſtill think it ſhort of their merits. Princes have often experimented this in thoſe who have don them ſignal ſervices; but God finds it in thoſe who have don him none, and we expect

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he ſhall diſpenſe to us according to thoſe falſe eſtimates we put upon our ſelves. Therefore he that aſpires to Content, muſt firſt take truer meſures of himſelf, and conſider that as he was nothing till God gave him a being, ſo all that he can produce from that being, is God's by original right, and therefore can pretend to nothing of reward; ſo that whatever he receives, is ſtill upon the account of new bounty; and to complain that he has no more, is like the murmurs of an unthankful debtor, who would ſtill encreaſe thoſe ſcores which he knows he can never pay.

A ſecond to reflect on the goods that are enjoied.

3. In the ſecond place, let every man conſider how many bleſſings (notwithſtanding his no clame to any) he daily enjoies: and whether thoſe he ſo impatiently raves after be not much inferior to them. Nay let him ask his own heart, whether he would quit all thoſe he has, for them he wants, and if he would not, (as I ſuppoſe no man in his wits would, thoſe wits being part of the barter) let him then judg how unreaſonable his repinings are, when himſelf confeſſes he has the better part of worldly happineſs, and never any man living had all.

A third to be thankful for them.

4. In the third place therefore let him ſecure his duty of thankfulneſs for thoſe good things he hath, and that will inſenſibly undermine his impatiences for the reſt, it being impoſſible to be at once thankful and murmuring. To this purpoſe it were very well, if he would keep a ſolemn catalogue of all the bounties, protections, and deliverances he has receiv'd from God's hand, and every night examin what acceſſions that day has brought to the ſum: and he that did this, would undoubtedly find ſo many incitations to gratitude, that all thoſe to diſcontent would be ſtifled in the croud. And ſince acknowledgment of God's mercies is all the tribute he exacts for them, we muſt certanly look on that as an indiſpenſable duty: and therefore he that finds that God ſhortens his hand, ſtops the efflux of his bounty towards him, ſhould reflect on himſelf, whether he be not behind in that homage by which he holds, and have not by his unthankfulneſs *turn'd away good things from him*, Jer. 5. 25. And if he find it ſo (as who alas is there that may not?) he cannot ſure for ſhame complain, but muſt in prudence reinforce his gratitude for what is left, as the beſt means to recover what he has loſt.

A fourth to reflect that good things are enjoied, when the contrary are deſerv'd.

5. But his murmurs will yet be more amazingly ſilenc'd, if in the fourth place he compares the good things he enjoies with the ill he has don. Certainly this is a moſt infallible cure for our impatiences, the holieſt man living being able to accuſe himſelf of ſuch ſins, as would according to all human meſures of equity forfeit all bleſſings, and pull down a greater weight of judgment than the moſt miſerable groan under. Therefore as before I adviſed to keep a catalogue of benefits receiv'd, ſo here it would be of uſe to draw up one of ſins committed. And doubtleſs he that confronts the one with the other cannot but be aſtoniſhed to find them both ſo numerous, equally wondring at God's mercy in continuing his bleſſings, in deſpight of all his provocations, and at his own baſeneſs in continuing his provocations, in deſpight of all thoſe bleſſings. Indeed 'tis nothing but our affected ignorance of our own demerits, that makes it poſſible for us to repine under the ſevereſt of God's diſpenſations. Would we but ranſack our hearts, and ſee all the abominations that lie there, nay would the moſt of us but recollect thoſe barefac'd crimes which even the world can witneſs againſt us, we ſhould find more than enough to balance the heavieſt of our preſſures. When therefore by our impatient ſtruglings we fret and gall our ſelves under our burdens, let us interrogate our ſouls in the words of the Prophet, *Why doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment*

niſhment of his ſin? Let us not ſpend our breath in murmurs and out-cries, which will only ſerve to provoke more ſtripes: but *let us ſearch and try our waies, and turn again to the Lord*, Lam. 3. 39,40. diligently ſeek out *that accurſed thing* which has cauſed our diſcomfeiture, Joſ. 6. 18. and by the removal of that, prepare the way for the acceſs of mercy. But alas how prepoſterous a method do we take in our afflictions? We accuſe every thing but what we ought, furiouſly fly at all the ſecond cauſes of our calamity, nay too often at the firſt by impious diſputes of providence, and in the mean time, as *Job* ſpeaks, *the root of the matter is found in us*, Job 19. 28. We ſhelter and protect in our boſoms the real Author of our miſeries. The true way then to allay the ſenſe of our ſufferings, is to ſharpen that of our ſins. The prodigal thought the meaneſt condition in his fathers family a preferment, *Make me one of thy hired ſervants*, Luke 15. 19. And if we have his penitenee, we ſhall have his ſubmiſſion alſo, and calmly attend Gods diſpoſals of us.

A fifth, to reflect that what befalls us, is from the hand of God; and a ſixth that 'tis an advantage to have here our evil things.

6. As every man in his affliction is to look inward on his own heart, ſo alſo upward, and conſider by whoſe providence all events are order'd. *Is there any evil* (*i. e.* of puniſhment) *in the city, and the Lord hath not don it?* Am. 3. 6. and what are we worms that we ſhould diſpute with him? Shall a man contend with his Maker? Let the *potſherd ſtrive with the potſherds of the earth*, Iſa. 45. 9. And as his power is not to be control'd, ſo neither is his juſtice to be impeach'd. *Shall not the judg of all the earth do right?* Gen. 18. 25. And where we can neither reſiſt nor appeal, what have we to do but humbly to ſubmit? Nor are we only compell'd to it by neceſſity, but induced and invited by intereſt, ſince his diſpenſations are directed not barely to aſſert his dominion, but to evidence his paternal care over us. He diſcerns our needs, and accordingly applies to us. The benignity of his nature permits him not to take delight in our diſtreſſes, *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. 3. 33. and therefore when ever he adminiſters to us a bitter cup, we may be ſure the ingredients are medicinal, and ſuch as our infirmities require. He dares not truſt our intemperate appetites with unmixt proſperities, the luſhiouſneſs whereof tho it may pleaſe our palats, yet like St. *Johns* book, Rev. 10. 9. that *hony in the mouth may prove gall in the bowels*, ingender the moſt fatal diſeaſes. Let us therefore in our calamities *not conſult with fleſh and blood*, Gal. 1. 16. (which the more it is bemoan'd, the more it complains) but look to the hand that ſtrikes; and aſſure our ſelves, that the ſtripes are not more ſevere, then he ſees neceſſary in order to our good: and ſince they are ſo, they ought in reaſon to be our choices as well as his; and not only religion, but ſelf-love will promt us to ſay, with old *Ely*, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 11. But alas we do not underſtand what is our intereſt; becauſe we do not rightly underſtand what we are our ſelves. We conſider our ſelves merely in our animal being, our bodies and thoſe ſenſitive faculties veſted in them, and when we are invaded there, we think we are undon, tho that breach be made only, to relieve that diviner part within us, beſieged and oppreſt with the fleſh about it (for ſo God knows it too often is;) or if we do not conſider it in that notion of an enemy, yet at the utmoſt eſtimate, the body is to the ſoul but as the garment to the body, a decent caſe or cover: now what man (not ſtark frantic) would not rather have his clothes cut then his fleſh? and then by the rate of proportion, we may well queſtion our own ſobriety, when we repine that our ſouls are ſecur'd at the coſt of our bodies, and that is certainly the worſt, the unkindeſt deſign, that God has upon us; and our impatient

reſiſtances ſerve only to fruſtrate the kind, the medicinal part of afflictions, but will not at all reſcue us from the ſevere. Our murmurings may ruine our ſouls, but will never avert any of our outward calamities.

A ſeventh, to have a right eſtimate of the world, and the ſtate of humanity.

7. A ſeventh help to contentment is to have a right eſtimate of the world, and the common ſtate of humanity: to conſider the world but as a ſtage and our ſelves but as actors, and to reſolve that it is very little material what part we play ſo we do it well. A Comedian may get as much applauſe by acting the ſlave as the conqueror, and he that acts the one to day, may to morrow reverſe the part, and perſonate the other. So great are the viciſſitudes of the world, that there is no building any firm hopes upon it. All the certainty we have of it, is, that in every condition it has its uneaſineſſes: ſo that when we court a change, we rather ſeek to vary then end our miſeries. And certainly he that has well impreſt upon his mind the vanity and vexation of the world, cannot be much ſurpriſed at any thing that befalls him in it. We expect no more of any thing but to do its kind, and we may as well be angry that we cannot bring the lions to our cribs, or fix the wind to a certain point, as that we cannot ſecure our ſelves from dangers and diſappointments in this rough and mutable world. We are therefore to lay it as an infallible maxim, that in this vale of tears every man muſt meet with ſorrows and diſaſters: and then ſure we may take our peculiar with evenneſs of of temper, as being but the natural conſequent of our being men. And tho poſſibly we may every one think himſelf to have a double portion, yet that is uſually from the deceitful compariſons we make of our ſelves with others. We take the magnifying glaſſes of diſcontent and envy when we view our own miſeries and others felicities, but look on our enjoiments and their ſufferings thro the contracting optics of ingratitude and incompaſſion: and whilſt we do thus, 'tis impoſſible but we muſt foment our own diſſatisfactions. He that will compare to good purpoſe muſt do it honeſtly and ſincerely, and view his neighbors calamities with the ſame attention he do's his own, & his own comforts with the ſame he do's his neighbors; and then many of the great ſeeming inequalities would come pretty neer a level.

An eighth to conſider how ill natur'd a thing envy and diſcontent is.

8. But even where they do not, it in the 8th place deſerves however to be conſider'd how ill natur'd a thing it is, for any man to think himſelf more miſerable becauſe another is happy: and yet this is the very thing, by which alone many men have made themſelves wretched: for many have created wants, merely from the envious contemplation of other mens abundance. And indeed there is nothing more diſingenuous, or (to go higher) more Diabolical. *Lucifer* was happy enough in his original ſtate, yet could not think himſelf ſo becauſe he was *not like the moſt high*, Iſa. 14. 14. And when by that inſolent ambition he had forfeited bliſs, it has ever ſince bin an aggravation of his torment, that mankind is aſſumed to a capacity of it; aud accordingly he makes it the deſign of his envious induſtry to defeat him. Now how perfectly are the two firſt parts of this copy tranſcrib'd, by thoſe who firſt cannot be ſatisfied with any inferior degree of proſperity, and then whet their impatiences with other mens enjoiments of what they cannot attain? And 'tis much to doubted, that they who go thus far may compleat the parallel, and endeavor when they have opportunity to undermine that happineſs they envy. Therefore ſince Satan is ſo apt to impreſs his whole image, where he has drawn any of his lineaments it concerns us warily to guard our ſelves, and by a Chriſtian ſympathy with our brethren, *rejoice with them that do rejoice*, Rom. 12. 15. make the comforts of others, an allay not an improvement of our own miſeries. Charity has

has a ſtrange magnetic power, and attracts the concerns of our brethren to us, and he that has that in his breaſt can never want refreſhment, whilſt any about him are happy; for by adopting their intereſt, he ſhares in their joies. *Jethro* tho an alien *rejoiced for all the good God had don to Iſrael*, Exod. 18.9. and why ſhould not we have as ſenſible a concurrence with our fellow Chriſtians? And he that has ſo, will ſtill find ſomthing to balance his own ſufferings.

A ninth, to deſire few things.

9. Let him that aſpires to contentment ſet bounds to his deſire. 'Tis our common fault in this affair, we uſually begin at the wrong end, we *enlarge our deſires as hell, and cannot be ſatisfied*, Hab. 2. 5. and then think God uſes us ill, if he do not fill our inſatiable appetites: whereas if we would confine our expectations to thoſe things which we need, or he has promis'd, there are few of us who would not find them abundantly anſwer'd. Alas how few things are there which our nature (if not ſtimulated by fancy and luxury) requires? And how rare is it to find them who want thoſe? Nay who have not many additionals for delight and pleſure? And yet Gods promiſe under the Goſpel extends only to thoſe neceſſaries; for where *Chriſt* aſſures his diſciples that *theſe things ſhall be added unto them*, Matt. 6. 33. the context apparently reſtrains *theſe things* to meat and drink and clothing. Therefore take *no thought for the life what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink, nor yet for the body what you ſhall put on*, verſe 25. Now what pretence have we to clame more then our Charter gives us? God never articled with the ambitious to give him honors, with the covetous to fill his bags, or with the voluptuous to feed his luxuries. Let us therefore, if we expect to be ſatisfied, modeſtly confine our deſires within the limits he has ſet us: and then every acceſſion which he ſuperadds will appear (what it is) a largeſs and bounty. But whilſt our appetites are boundleſs, and rather ſtretcht then filled with our acqueſt's; what poſſibility is there of their ſatisfaction? And when we importune God for it, we do but aſſign him ſuch a task the Poets made a repreſentation of their Hell, the filling a ſieve with water, or the rolling a ſtone up a precipice.

A tenth, to confine our thoughts to the preſent time.

10. A great expedient for contentment, is to confine our thoughts to the preſent, and not to let them looſe to future events. Would we but do this, we might ſhake off a great part of our burden: for we often heap fantaſtic loads upon our ſelves by anxious preſages of things which perhaps will never happen, and yet ſink more under them, then under the real weight that is actually upon us. And this is certainly one of the greateſt follies imaginable: for either the evil will come or it will not, if it will, 'tis ſure no ſuch deſiderable gueſt that we ſhould go out to meet it, we ſhall feel it time enough when it falls on us, we need not project to anticipate our ſenſe of it: but if it will not, what extreme madneſs is it for a man to torment himſelf with that which will never be, to create engines of tortures, and by ſuch aerial afflictions, make himſelf as miſerable as the moſt real ones could do? And truly this is all that we uſually get by our fore-ſights. Previſion is one of God's attributes, and he mocks at all our pretences to it, by a frequent defeating of all our fore caſts. He do's it often in our hopes: ſome little croſſe circumſtance many times demoliſhes thoſe goodly machins we raiſe to our ſelves: and he do's it no leſs in our fears, thoſe ills we ſolemnly expected often baulk us, and others from an unexpected coaſt ſuddenly invade us. And ſince we are ſo blind, ſo ſhort-ſighted, let us never take upon us to be ſcouts, to diſcover danger at a diſtance (for 'tis manifold odds we ſhall only bring home falſe alarms) but let us reſt our ſelves upon that moſt admirable Aphoriſm of our bleſſed

Lord, *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*, Matt. 6. 34. apply our ſelves with Chriſtian courage to bear the preſent, and leave God either to augment or diminiſh, as he ſees fit for the future. Or if we will needs be looking forward, let it be in obedience not contradiction to our duty: let us entertain our ſelves with thoſe futurities which we are ſure are not Chimera's, death and judgment, heaven and hell. The nearer we draw theſe things to our view, the more inſenſible will all intermedial objects be; they will deceive our ſenſe of preſent, and much more fore-ſtall the apprehenſion of future evils: for 'tis our neglect of things eternal, that leaves us thus at leiſure for the tranſitory.

An eleventh to have recourſe to God by praier.

11. In the laſt place let us in all our diſtreſſes ſuperſede our anxieties and ſollicitudes by that moſt effectual remedy the Apoſtle preſcribes, *Is any man afflicted, let him pray*, Jam. 5. 14. And this ſure is a moſt rational preſcription: for alas what elſe can we do towards the redreſs of our griefs. We who are ſo impotent, that we have not power over the moſt deſpicable excreſcence of our own body, cannot make *one hair white or black*, Matt. 5. 36. what can we do towards the new moulding our condition, or modelling things without us? Our ſollicitudes ſerve only to bind our burdens faſter upon us, but this expedient of Praier will certainly relieve us. *Call upon me*, ſaies God, *in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou ſhalt praiſe me*, Pſal. 50. 15. When ever therefore we are ſinking in the floods of affliction, let us thus ſupport our ſelves by repreſenting our wants unto our gracious Lord, cry unto him as St. *Peter* did, Matt. 14. 30. and he will *take us by the hand, and be the winds* never ſo *boiſterous or contrary*, preſerve us from ſinking: the waves or billows of this troubleſom world, will ſerve but to toſs us cloſer into his arms, who can with a word appeaſe the rougheſt tempeſt, or reſcue from it. O let us not then be ſo unkind to our ſelves, as to neglect this infallible means of our deliverance! but with the Pſalmiſt take our refuge under the *ſhadow of the Divine wings till the calamity be over-paſt*, Pſal. 57. 1. And as this is a ſure expedient in all our real important afflictions, ſo is it a good teſt by which to try what are ſo. We are often peeviſh and diſquieted at trifles, nay we take up the quarrels of our luſts and vices, and are diſcontented when they want their wiſht ſupplies. Now in either of theſe caſes, no man that at all conſiders who he praies to, will dare to inſert theſe in his praiers, it being a contemt of God to invoke him in things ſo ſlight as the one, or impious as the other. It will therefore be good for every man when he goes to addreſs for relief, to conſider which of his preſſures they are, that are worthy of that ſolemn deprecation: and when he has ſingled thoſe out, let him reflect, and he will find he has in that prejudg'd all his other diſcontents as frivolous or wicked. And then ſure he cannot think fit to harbour them, but muſt for ſhame diſmiſs them, ſince they are ſuch, as he dares not avow to him, from whom alone he can expect relief. God alwaies pities our real miſeries, but our imaginary ones dare not demand it. Let us not then create ſuch diſeaſes to our ſelves, as we cannot declare to our Phyſitian: and when thoſe are precluded, for all the reſt St. *Pauls* recipe is a Catholicon, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by praiers and ſupplications, with thanksgiving, let your requeſts be made known to God.* Phil. 4. 6.

SECT.

Sect. XI.

Of Reſignation.

1. AND now amidſt ſuch variety of receits, 'twill be hard to inſtance any one ſort of calamity which can eſcape their efficacy, if they be but duly appli'd. But indeed we have generally a compendious way of fruſtrating all remedies by never making uſe of them: like fantaſtic patients we are well enough content to have our diſeaſe diſcourſt, and medicines preſcrib'd, but when the Phyſic comes, have ſtill ſome pretence or other to protract the taking it. But I ſhall beſeech the Reader to conſider, that counſels are not charms, to work without any cooperation of the concern'd perſon: they muſt be adverted to, they muſt be ponder'd and conſider'd, and finally they muſt be practic'd, or elſe the utmoſt good they can do us, is to give us a few hours divertiſment in the reading: but they do us a miſchief that infinitly out-weighs it, for they improve our guilts by the ineffective tender they make of reſcuing us from them, and leave us accountable not only for the original crimes, but our obſtinate adheſion to them in ſpight of admonition. *Counſels are not charms, to operate by being repeted;*

2. I ſay this becauſe it is a little too notorious, that many take up books only as they do cards or dice, as an inſtrument of diverſion. 'Tis a good entertainment of their curioſity to ſee what can be ſaid upon any ſubject, and be it well or ill handled, they can pleaſe themſelves equally with the ingenuity or ridiculouſneſs of the compoſure, and when they have don this, they have don all they deſign'd. This indeed may be tolerable in Romances and Play-books, but ſure it ill befits Divinity. And yet I fear it oftneſt happens there: for in the former ſome do project for ſome trivial improvements, as the embelliſhing of their ſtile, the inſpiriting of their fancies; and ſome men would ſcarce be able to drive their pedling trade of wit, did they not thus ſweep the ſtage: but alas how many books of piety are read, of which one cannot diſcern the leaſt tincture in mens converſations, which ſure do's in a great meſure proceed from the want of a determinate deſign in their reading, mens practice being not apt to be leſs rovers than their ſpeculation. He that takes a practical ſubject in hand, muſt do it with a deſign to conform his practice to what he ſhall there be convinc'd to be his duty, and he that comes not with this probity of mind, is not like to be much benefited by his reading. *Nor are books to be taken up as cards and dice for diverſion,*

3. But one would think this ſhould be an unneceſſary caution at this time, for ſince the intent of this tract, is only to ſhew men the way to Contentment, 'tis to be ſuppos'd the Readers will be as much in earneſt as the Writer can be, it being every man's proper and moſt important intereſt, the inſtating him in the higheſt and moſt ſupreme felicity that this world can admit: yet for all this fair probability, I doubt many will in this inſtance have the ſame indifference they have in their other ſpiritual concerns. *Eſpecially in ſo important a concern, as the being contented.*

4. 'Tis true indeed that a querulous repining humor is one of the moſt pernicious, the moſt ugly habits incident to mankind, but yet as deformed people are oft the moſt in love with themſelves, ſo this crooked piece of our temper is of all others the moſt indulgent to it ſelf. Melancholy is the moſt ſtubborn & untractable of all humors; and diſcontent being the off-ſpring of that, partakes of that inflexibility: and accordingly we *Diſcontent is a humor which is moſt indulgent to it ſelf, and 'tis hard to bring men to a real willingneſs to be cur'd.*

ſee how impregnable it often is, againſt all aſſaults of reaſon and Religion too. *Jonah* in a ſullen mood would juſtify his diſcontent even to God himſelf, and in ſpight of that calm reproof, *doſt thou well to be angry*? Jon. 4. 9 aver *he did well to be angry even to death.* And do we not frequently ſee men upon an impatience of ſome diſappointment, grow angry even at their comforts? Their friends, their children, their meat, their drink, every thing grows nauſeous to them, and in a frantic diſcontent, they often fling away thoſe things which they moſt value. Beſides this peeviſh impatience is of ſo aerial a diet, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible to ſtarve it. 'Twill nouriſh it ſelf with Phantaſms and Chimeras, ſuborn a thouſand ſurmiſes and imaginary diſtreſſes to abet its pretences: and tho every one of us can remonſtrate to one another, the unreaſonableneſs of this diſcontent; yet ſcarce any of us will draw the argument home, or ſuffer our ſelves to be convinc'd by what we urge as irrefragable to others. Nay farther this humor is impatient of any diverſion, loves to converſe only with it ſelf. In bodily pains, men that deſpair of cure are yet glad of allaies and mitigations, and ſtrive by all arts to divert and deceive the ſenſe of their anguiſh; but in this diſeaſe of the mind, men cheriſh and improve their torment, roll and chew the bitter pill in their mouths, that they may be ſure to have its utmoſt flavor; and by devoting all their thoughts to the ſubject of their grief, keep up an uninterrupted ſenſe of it: as if they had the ſame Tyranny for themſelves which *Caligula* had for others, and loved to feel themſelves die. Indeed there is not a more abſurd contradiction in the world, than to hear men cry out of the weight, the intolerableneſs of their burden, and yet graſp it as faſt as if their life were bound up in it; will not depoſite it, no not for the ſmalleſt breathing time. A ſtrange faſcination ſure, and yet ſo frequent, that it ought to be the fundamental care of him that would cure men of their diſcontents, to bring them to a hearty willingneſs of being cured.

Diſcontent is a dropſy of the mind, is not to be cur'd by having its thirſts ſatisfied, but by altering the conſtitution.

5. It may be this will look like paradox, and every man will be apt to ſay he wiſhes nothing more in earneſt, than to be cured of his preſent diſcontent. He that is poor would be cured by wealth, he that is low and obſcure by honor and greatneſs: but ſo an Hydropic perſon may ſay he deſires to have his thirſt cur'd by a perpetual ſupply of drink: yet all ſober people know, that that is the way only to increaſe it: but let the whole habit of the body be rectified, and then the thirſt will ceaſe of it ſelf. And certainly 'tis the very ſame in the preſent caſe, no outward acceſſions will ever ſatisfy our cravings, our appetites muſt be tam'd and reduc'd, and then they will never be able to raiſe tumults, or put us into mutiny and diſcontent: and he (and none but he) that ſubmits to this method, can truly be ſaid to deſire a cure.

The cure is certainly poſſible:

6. But he that thus atteſts the reality of his deſires, and ſeeks Contentment in its proper ſphere, may ſurely arrive to ſome conſiderable degrees of it. We find in all ages men that only by the direction of natural light have calmed their diſquiets, and reaſon'd themſelves into Contentment, even under great and ſenſible preſſures; men who amidſt the acuteſt torments have ſtill preſerv'd a ſerenity of mind, and have fruſtrated contemts and reproches by diſregarding them: and ſure we give a very ill account of our Chriſtianity, if we cannot do as much with it as they did without it.

And if we do our part, will be aſſiſted by God's goodneſs.

7. I do not here propoſe ſuch a Stoical inſenſibility as makes do diſtinction of events, which, tho it has bin vainly pretended to by many, yet ſure was never attain'd by any upon the ſtrength of diſcourſe. Some natural dulneſs or caſual ſtupefaction muſt concur to that, and perhaps by doing

doing ſo, has had the luck to be canoniz'd for vertue. I mean only ſuch a ſuperiority of mind as raiſes us above our ſufferings, tho it exemt us not from the ſenſe of them. We cannot propoſe to our ſelves a higher pattern in any vertue than our bleſſed Lord: yet we ſee he not only felt that load under which he lay, but had the moſt pungent and quick ſenſe of it, ſuch as promted thoſe earneſt deprecations, *Father, if it be poſſible let this cup paſs:* yet all thoſe diſplacences of his fleſh were ſurmounted by the reſignation of his ſpirit, *nevertheleſs not what I will, but what thou wilt*, Matt. 26. 39. And certainly he that in imitation of this pattern, do's in ſpight of all the reluctances of his ſenſe, thus entirely ſubmit his will, however he may be ſad, yet he is not impatient; nor is he like to be ſad long; for to him that is thus reſign'd, *light will ſpring up*, Pſalm 97. 11. ſome good Angel will be ſent like that to our Savior to relieve his diſconſolation. God will ſend either ſome outward allaies, or give ſuch interior comforts and ſupports, as ſhall counterpoiſe thoſe afflictious he takes not off.

God's deſign in correcting us is that of a Parent to break our wills.

8. Indeed the grand deſign of God in correcting us is (the ſame with that of a prudent parent towards his child) to break our wills. That ſtubborn faculty will ſcarce bend with eaſy touches, and therefore do's require ſome force: and when by that rougher handling, he has brought it to a pliantneſs, the work is don. 'Tis therefore our intereſt to cooperate with this deſign, to aſſiſt as much as we are able towards the ſubjugating this unruly part of our ſelves. This is that *Sheba* 2 Sam. 20. the ſurrendring of whom is God's expectation in all the cloſe ſieges he laies to us. Let us then be ſo wiſe, as by an early reſigning it to divert his farther hoſtilities, and buy our peace with him.

Reſignation is the ſhort way to ſerenity of mind.

9. And truly this is the way not only to gain peace with him, but our ſelves too: 'tis the uſurpation of our will over our reaſon which breeds all the confuſion and tumults within our own breaſts, and there is no poſſibility of curbing its inſolence, but by putting it into ſafe cuſtody, committing it to him who (as our Church teaches us) alone can order the unruly wills of ſinful men. Indeed nothing but experience can fully inform us of the ſerenity and calm of that ſoul, who has reſign'd his will to God. All care of chuſing for himſelf is happily ſuperſeded, he is temted to no anxious forecaſts for future events, for he knows nothing can happen in contradiction of that ſupreme will, in which he hath ſanctuary: which will certainly chuſe for him with that tenderneſs and regard, that a faithful Guardian would for his Pupil, an indulgent father for his child that caſts its ſelf into his arms. Certainly there is not in the world ſuch a holy ſort of artifice, ſo Divine a charm to tie our God to us, as this of reſigning our ſelves to him. We find the *Gibeonites* by yielding themſelves vaſſals to the *Iſraelites*, had their whole army at their beck to reſcue them in their danger, *Joſ.* 10. 6. and can we think God is leſs conſiderate of his homagers and dependents? No Certainly, his honor as well as his compaſſion is concern'd in the relief of thoſe who have ſurrendred themſelves to him.

A method by which our wills can never be croſt.

10. Farther yet, when by reſignation we have united our wills to God, we have quite changed the ſcene, and we who when our wills ſtood ſingle were liable to perpetual defeats, in this bleſſed combination can never be croſt. When our will is twiſted and involved with God's, the ſame Omnipotence which backs his will, do's alſo attend ours. God's will, we are ſure, admits of no controle, can never be reſiſted, and we have the ſame ſecurity for ours, ſo long as it concurs with it. By this means

all

all calamities are unſting'd, and even thoſe things which are moſt repugnant to our ſenſitive natures, are yet very agreable to our ſpirits, when we conſider they are implicitly our own choice, ſince they are certainly his, whom we have deputed to elect for us. Indeed there can be no face of adverſity ſo averting and formidable, which ſet in this light will not look amiable. We ſee daily how many uneaſineſſes and prejudices men will contentedly ſuffer in purſuit of their wills: and if we have really eſpouſed God's, made his will ours, we ſhall with as great (nay far greater) alacrity embrace its diſtributions, how uneaſy ſoever to our ſenſe; our ſouls will more acquieſce in the accompliſhment of the Divine will, then our fleſh can reluct to any ſevere effects of it.

Nothing can fall out unhappily.

11. Here then is that footing of firm ground, on which whoſoever can ſtand, may indeed do that which *Archimedes* boaſted, move the whole world. He may as to himſelf ſubvert the whole courſe of ſublunary things, unvenom all thoſe calamities which are to others the gall of Aſps; and in a farther ſenſe verify that Evangelical Prophecy, of *beating ſwords into plough-ſhares, ſpears into pruning hooks*, Iſaiah 2. 4. the moſt hoſtile weapons, the moſt adverſe events ſhall be by him converted into inſtruments of fertility, ſhall only advance his ſpiritual growth.

The unreſigned can get nothing by it, but the ſullen pleaſure of oppoſing God and tormenting themſelves.

12. And now who can chuſe but confeſs this a much more eligible ſtate, than to be alwaies harraſſed with ſolicitudes and cares, perpetually either fearing future defeats, or bewailing the paſt. And then what can we call it leſs than madneſs or enchantment, for men to act ſo contrary to their own dictates, yea to their very ſenſe and experience, to ſee and acknowledge the inexplicable felicity of a reſigned will, and yet perverſly to hold out theirs, tho they can get nothing by it, but the ſullen pleaſure of oppoſing God, and tormenting themſelves? Let us therefore if not for our duty or eaſe, yet at leaſt for our reputation, the aſſerting our ſelves men of ſobriety and common ſenſe, do that which upon all theſe intereſts we are obliged; let us but give up our wills, and with them we ſhall certainly diveſt our ſelves of all our fruitleſs anxieties, and caſt our burdens upon him who invites us to do ſo. He who bears all our ſins, will bear all our ſorrows, our griefs too: if we will but be content to depoſite them, he will relieve us from all thoſe oppreſſing weights, which make *our ſouls cleave to the duſt*, Pſalm 119. 25. and will in exchange give us only his *light*, *his pleaſant burden*, Matt. 11. 30. In a word, there will be no care left for us, but that of keeping our ſelves in a capacity of his: let us but ſecure our love to him, and we are aſcertain'd that *all things ſhall work together for our good*, Rom. 8. 28.

Reſignation and Contentment differ only as the cauſe and the effect.

13. To conclude, Reſignation and Contentment are vertues not only of a near cognation and reſemblance, but they are linked as the Cauſe and the Effect. Let us but make ſure of Reſignation, and Content will flow into us without our farther induſtry: as on the contrary whilſt our wills are at defiance with God's, we ſhall alwaies find things at as great defiance with ours. All our ſubtleties or induſtries will never mould them to our ſatisfactions, till we have moulded our ſelves into that pliant temper that we can cordially ſay, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18.

The

The Close.

1. THis short institution of the *Art of Contentment*, cannot more naturally, or more desirably draw to a conclusion, then in the resort we have given it, in the bosome of divine *Providence*. The Roman conquerors as the last pitch of all their triumphs went to the Capitol, and laid their Garlands in the lap of *Jupiter:* but the Christian has an easier way to Triumph, to put his crown of thorns (for that is the trophy of his victories) within the arms of his gracious God; there lodg his fears, his wants, his sorrows, and himself too, as in the best repository.

The Christian, like the Roman conquerors, as the last pitch of triumph, must lay their garland in the lap of their God.

2. The Gospel command of *not caring for the morrow*, Matt. 6. 34. and being *careful for nothing*, Phil. 4. 6. nakedly propos'd, might seem the abandoning of us to all the calamities of life: but when we are directed to *cast all our care* upon a gracious and all-powerful Parent, and are assur'd that *he cares for us*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. that *tho a woman may forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion of the son of her womb, yet will he not forget* his children, Isa. 49. 15. this will abundantly supersede all cavil and objection. Whilst worldly men trust in an arm of flesh, lay up *treasure on earth*, a prey for *rust and moth*, Matt. 6. 19. and *a torment* to themselves, Jam. 5. 3. the Christian has Omnipotence for his support, and a *treasure in heaven, where no thief approches, nor moth corrupts*, Matt. 6. 20. Whilst bold inquirers call in question Gods secret will, oblige him to their sub or supralapsarian schemes, their absolute or conditional decrees, their grace foreseen or predetermin'd; the pious man with aweful acquiescence submits to that which is reveal'd: resolves for ever to obey, but never to dispute; as knowing that the belov'd Disciple lean'd on his Masters bosome; but 'tis the thiefs and traitors part to go about to rifle it.

'Tis the belov'd disciples property, to lean on his Lords bosom.

3. 'Tis surely a modest demand in the behalf of God Almighty, that we should allow him as much privilege in his world, as every Pesant clames in his Cottage; to be Master there, and dispose of his house-hold as he thinks best: to *say to this man, Go, and he goeth: and another, Come, and he cometh: and to his servant, Do this, and he doth it*, Matt. 8. 9. And if we would afford him this liberty, there would be an immediate end put to all clamor and complaint.

God may demand as much privilege in his World as a Pesant clames in his cottage.

4. We make it our daily praier that the *will* of God *may be don in earth as it is in heaven*, with a ready, swift, and uninterrupted constancy. As 'tis Giantlike rebellion to set up our will against his, so is it mad perverseness to set it up against our own; be displeas'd that our requests are granted, and repine that his, and therewith our will is don. It were indeed not only good manners, but good policy, to observe the direction of the Heathen, and *follow God:* not prejudg his determinations by ours; but in a modest suspension of our thoughts, *hearken what the Lord God will say concerning us, for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his Saints that they turn not again*, Psal. 85. 8.

We pray that Gods will may be don; and 'tis a strange perverseness to set up our will, at once against God's will and our own.

5. Or however upon surprise we may indulge to a passionate affection, and dote upon our illegitimate off-spring, our dearling guilts or follies, as *David* did upon that Child, who was the price of Murder and Adultery: yet when the brat is taken from us, when the *Child is dead*, it will become us to do as he did, rise from our sullen posture on the earth, and *worship in the house of the Lord*, 2 Sam. 12. 20. It will behove us, as he saies in another place, to *lay our hand upon our mouth, because it was his doing*, Psal. 30. 10. and with holy *Job* Chap. 40. 4. when charg'd with his mur-

Especially, to mourn when the dearling child is dead.

murings, *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer? Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.*

Contentment is the riches of nature, as opos'd to those of fortune and opinion.

6. *Socrates* rightly said of Contentment, opposing it to the riches of fortune and opinion, that 'tis the wealth of nature; for it gives every thing that we have learnt to want, and really need: but Resignation is the riches of Grace, bestowing all things that a Christian not only needs, but can desire, even Almighty God himself. He indeed, as the Scholemen teach, is the objective happiness of the Creature; He who is the fountain of being, must be also of blessedness: and tho this be only communicable to us, when we have put off that *flesh which cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, and laid aside that *corruption* which cannot *inherit incorruption*, 1 Cor. 15. yet even in this life, we may make approches to that blessed state, by acts of Resignation and denial of our selves. It was the generous saying of *Socrates* being about to die unto his friend; O *Crito*, since it is the will of God, so let it be: *Anytus* and *Melitus* may kill me, but cannot hurt me. But such a resignation, as 'tis infinitly a greater duty to a Christian, so it is also a more firm security. In that case 'tis not the *Martyr*, but *Jesus* of *Nazareth* who is thus persecuted, and he who attaques him will find *it hard to kick against the pricks*, Act. 9. 5.

It was the utmost instance of profligate sensuality to murmur for want of leeks and onions.

7. There could not be a greater instance of the profligate sensuality of the *Israelites*, then that they murmured for want of *leeks and onions*, Num. 11. 5. when they ate Angels food, and had bread rain'd down from heaven. 'Tis impossible for the soul that is sensible of God Almighties favor, to repine at any earthly pressure. *The Lord is my shepherd*, saith *David*, *therefore can I lack nothing*, Psal. 23. 1. And, *thou hast put gladness into my heart, more then when their corn and wine, and oil increased*, Psal. 4. 7. and in passionate rapture he cries out, Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee: and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee? my flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And likewise Psal. 46. 1. *God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, tho the earth be moved: and tho the hills be carried into the midst of the sea. Tho the waters thereof rage and swell, and tho the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.* If God be *in the midst of us, we shall not be removed, he will help us, and that right early.* Let us therefore possess our selves of this support, and as the Prophet advises, Isa. 8. 12. *neither fear, nor be afraid*, in any exigence how great soever; but *be still and quiet, and sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be our fear, and let him be our dread.*

FINIS.

THE

THE

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THE CONTENTS

THE
LIVELY ORACLES
GIVEN TO US,
OR THE
CHRISTIANS BIRTHRIGHT
and Duty in the cuſtody and uſe of the
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

THE PREFACE.

IN the Treatise of the Government of the Tongue publisht by me heretofore, I had occasion to take notice among the exorbitances of that unruly part, which sets on fire the whole course of nature, and its self is set on fire from hell, James 3. 6. of the impious vanity prevailing in this Age, whereby men play with sacred things, and exercise their wit upon those Scriptures by which they shall be judg'd at the last day, John 12. 48.

The incidental reflections in the treatise of the Government of the Tongue, of the abuse of Scripture.

But that holy Book not only suffering by the petulancy of the Tongue, but the malice of the heart, out of the abundance whereof the mouth speaks, Matt. 12. 34. and also from that irreligion, prepossession, and supineness which the pursuit of sensual pleasures certainly produces; the mischief is too much diffus'd and deeply rooted to be controul'd by a few casual reflections. I have therefore thought it necessary, both in regard of the dignity and importance of the subject, as also the prevalence of the opposition, to attemt a profest and particular vindication of the holy Scriptures, by displaying their native excellence and beauty, and enforcing the veneration and obedience that is to be paid unto them.

were insufficient against so prevailing a mischief.

This I design'd to do in my usual method, by an address to the affections of the Reader; soliciting the several passions of love, hope, fear, shame and sorrow, which either the Majesty of God in his sublime being, his goodness deriv'd to us, or our ingratitude return'd to him, could actuate in persons not utterly obdurate.

A more particular vindication is design'd by an address to affections,

But whereas men, when they have learnt to do amiss, quickly dispute and dictate; I found my self concern'd to pass somtimes within the verge of controversy, and to discourse upon the principles of reason, and deductions from Testimony, which in the most important transactions of human life are justly taken for evidence. In which whole performance I have studied to avoid the entanglements of Sophistry, and the ambition of unintelligible quotations; and kept my self within the reach of the unlearned Christian Reader, to whose uses my labors have bin ever dedicated.

And also to Reason.

All that I require, is that men would bring as much readiness to entertain the holy Scriptures, as they do to the reading profane Authors; I am asham'd to say, as they do to the incentives of vice and folly; nay, to the libels and invectives that are levell'd against the Scriptures.

'Tis desired that men would be as equal in the cause of the Scripture, as they are in secular concerns.

If I obtain this, I will make no doubt that I shall gain a farther point; that from the perusal of my imperfect conceptions, the Reader will proceed to the study of the Scriptures themselves: there taste and see how gracious the Lord is, Psalm 34. 8. and, as the Angel commanded Saint John, Rev. 10. 9. eat the Book; where he will experimentally find the words of David verified, Psalm 19. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The Law of the Lord is an undefiled Law, converting the Soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom to the simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light to the eies. The fear of the Lord is clean and endureth for ever, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desir'd are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than hony and the hony-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward.

This will produce this advantageous effect, that the Reader will be led to the study of the Scriptures themselves.

It

Moſes in receiving the Law had a brightneſs fixt upon his face, and the Goſpel has the like transfiguring power.

It is ſaid of Moſes, *Ex.* 34. 29. *that having receiv'd the Law from God, and converſt with him in Mount* Sina *forty daies together, his face ſhone and had a brightneſs fixt upon it that dazled the beholders; a pledg and ſhort eſſay not only of the appearance at Mount* Tabor, *Matt.* 17. 1. *where at the Transfiguration he again was ſeen in glory: but of that greater and yet future change when he ſhall ſee indeed his God* face to face, *and ſhare his glory unto all eternity. The ſame Divine Goodneſs gives ſtill his Law to every one of us. Let us receive it with due regard and veneration; converſe with him therein, inſtead of forty daies, during our whole lives; and ſo anticipate and certainly aſſure our intereſt in that great Transfiguration, when all the Faithful ſhall put off their mortal fleſh,* be tranſlated from glory to glory, *eternally behold their God,* ſee him as he is, *and ſo enjoy him.*

Familiarity is exceedingly apt to aſſimilate, & ſurely none can have ſo great an influence as a converſation with God.

Converſation has every where an aſſimilating power, we are generally ſuch as are the men and books, and buſineſs that we deal with: but ſurely no familiarity has ſo great an influence on Life and Manners, as when men hear God ſpeaking to them in his Word. That Word which the Apoſtle, Heb. 4. 12. *declares to* be quick and powerful, ſharper than any two-edg'd ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

All other books of curious Arts ſhall be burnt in the general conflagration.

The time will come when all our books, however recommended for ſubtilty of diſcourſe, exactneſs of method, variety of matter, or eloquence of Language; when all our curious arts, *like thoſe mention'd* Acts 19. 19. ſhall be brought forth, and burnt before all men: *when the great Book of nature, and* heaven it ſelf ſhall depart as a ſcroul roll'd together, *Rev.* 6. 14. *At which important ſeaſon 'twill be more to purpoſe to have ſtudied well, that is, tranſcrib'd in practice this one Book, than to have run thro all beſides;* for then the dead, ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand before God, and the Books ſhall be open'd, and another Book ſhall be open'd which is the Book of Life, and the dead ſhall be judg'd out of thoſe things which were written in the Books, according to their works, *Rev.* 20. 12.

They who will not hear Moſes and the Prophets, will be convinc'd by no miracle.

In vain ſhall men allege the want of due conviction, that they did not know how penal it would be, to diſregard the Sanctions of Gods Law, which they would have had enforc'd by immediat miracle; the apparition of one ſent from the other world, who might teſtify of the place of torment. *This expectation the Scripture charges every where with the guilt of temting God, and indeed it really involves this inſolent propoſal, that the Almighty ſhould be oblig'd to break his own Laws, that men might be prevail'd with to keep his. But ſhould he think fit to comply herein, the condeſcention would be as ſucceſsleſs in the event, as 'tis unreaſonable in the offer. Our Savior aſſures,* that they who hear not *Moſes* and the Prophets, *the inſtructions and commands laid down in holy Scripture, would not be wrought upon by any other method,* would not be perſwaded *by that which they allow for irreſiſtible conviction,* tho one roſe again from the dead, *Luke* 16. 31.

THE

THE Lively Oracles GIVEN TO US,

Or the Chriſtians Birth-right and Duty in the cuſtody and uſe of the HOLY SCRIPTURE.

SECT. I.

The ſeveral Methods of Gods communicating the knowledg of himſelf.

GOD, as he is inviſible to human eyes, ſo is he unfathomable by human underſtandings; the perfection of his nature, and the impotency of ours, ſetting us at too great a diſtance to have any clear perception of him. Nay, ſo far are we from a full comprehenſion, that we can diſcern nothing at all of him, but by his own light; thoſe diſcoveries he hath bin pleas'd to make of himſelf. *The knowledg of God is to be owed to the diſcoveries he makes.*

2. Thoſe have bin of ſeveral ſorts; The firſt was by infuſion in man's creation, when God interwove into man's very conſtitution and being the notions and apprehenſions of a Deity: and at the ſame inſtant when he breath'd into him a living ſoul, impreſt on it that native Religion, which taught him to know and reverence his Creator, which we may call the inſtinct of humanity. Nor were thoſe principles dark and confus'd, but clear and evident, proportionable to the ends they were deſign'd to, which were not only to contemplate the nature, but to do the will of God; practice being even in the ſtate of innocence preferable before an unactive ſpeculation. *The firſt intimation of the Deity was by infuſion at man's creation.*

3. But this Light being ſoon eclips'd by *Adams* diſobedience, there remain'd to his benighted poſterity only ſome faint glimmerings, which were utterly inſufficient to guide them to their end, without freſh aids, and renew'd manifeſtations of God to them. It pleas'd God therefore to repair this ruin, and by frequent revelations to communicate himſelf to the Patriarchs in the firſt Ages of the World; afterwards to Prophets, and other holy men; till at laſt he reveled himſelf yet more illuſtriouſly *in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *This light being ecclipſt by Adam's fall, was ſupplied by revelation.*

4. This is the one great comprehenſive Revelation wherein all the former were involv'd, and to which they pointed; the whole myſtery of Godlineſs being compris'd in this of *Gods* being *manifeſted in the flesh*, and the conſequents thereof, 1 Tim. 3. 16. whereby our Savior as he effected *Which recapitulates into that great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſted in flesh.*

our reconciliation with God by the sacrifice of his death; so he declar'd both that, and all things else that it concern'd man to know in order to bliss, in his doctrin and holy life. And this *Teacher* being not only *sent from God*, John 3. 2. but being himself God blessed for ever; it cannot be that his instructions can want any supplement. Yet that they might not want attestation neither to the incredulous world, he confirm'd them by the repeted miracles of his life, and by the testimony of those who saw the more irrefragable conviction of his Resurrection and ascension. And that they also might not want credit and enforcement, the holy Spirit set to his seal, and by his miraculous descent upon the Apostles, both asserted their commission, and enabled them for the discharge of it, by all gifts necessary for the propagating the Faith of Christ over the whole world.

This when received, is a trust to be transmitted to posterity.

5. These were the waies by which God was pleased to reveale himself to the Forefathers of our Faith, and that not only for their sakes, but ours also, to whom they were to derive those Divine dictats they had receiv'd. Saint *Stephen* tells us, those under the Law *receiv'd the lively Oracles* to deliver down to their posterity, *Acts* 7. 38. And those under the Gospel, who receiv'd yet more lively Oracles from him who was both the Word and the life, did it for the like purpose; to transmit it to us upon whom the ends of the world are come. By this all need of repeted Revelations is superseded, the faithful deriving of the former, being sufficient to us for *all things that appertain to life and godlness*, 2 Pet. 1. 3.

A means of this conveiance is the vouchsafement of holy Scripture.

6. And for this, God (whose care is equal for all successions of men) hath graciously provided, by causing Holy Scriptures to be writ; by which he hath deriv'd on every succeeding Age the illuminations of the former. And for that purpose endowed the Writers not only with that moral fidelity requisite to the truth of History, but with a Divine Spirit, proportionable to the great design of fixing an immutable rule for Faith and Manners. And to give us the fuller security herein, he has chosen no other Penmen of the New Testament, than those who were the first oral Promulgers of our Christian Religion; so that they have left to us the very same doctrin they taught the Primitive Christians; and he that acknowledges them Divinely inspir'd in what they preach'd, cannot doubt them to be so in what they writ. So that we all may enjoy virtually and effectively that wish of the devout Father, who desir'd to be Saint *Paul*'s Auditor: for he that hears any of his Epistles read, is as really spoke to by St. *Paul*, as those who were within the sound of his voice. *Thus God, who in times past spake at sundry times, and in diverse manners to our Fathers by the Prophets, and in the later daies by his Son*, Heb. 1. 1, 2. continues still to speak to us by these inspir'd Writers; and what Christ once said to his Disciples in relation to their preaching, is no less true of their writings: *He that despiseth you, despiseth me*, Luke 10. 16. All the contemt that is at any time flung on these sacred Writings, rebounds higher, and finally devolves on the first Author of those doctrins, whereof these are the Registers and Transcripts.

The contemt of which is defiance to Almighty God, & most unpardonable in Christians.

7. But this is a guilt which one would think peculiar to Infidels and Pagans, & not incident to any who had in their Baptism listed themselves under Christ's banner: yet I fear I may say, of the two parties, the Scripture has met with the worst treatment from the later. For if we mesure by the frequency and variety of injuries, I fear Christians will appear to have out-vied Heathens: these bluntly disbelieve them, neglect, nay perhaps scornfully deride them. Alas, Christians do this and more; they not only put contemts, but tricks upon the Scripture, wrest and distort

distort it to justify all their wild fancies, or secular designs; and suborn its Patronage to those things it forbids and tells us that God abhors.

The undervaluing of this holy Book is the most universal cause of the depravation of manners.

8. Indeed so many are the abuses we offer it, that he that considers them would scarce think we own'd it for the words of a sensible man, much less of the great omniscient God. And I believe 'twere hard to assign any one so comprehensive and efficacious cause of the universal depravation of manners, as the disvaluing of this Divine Book, which was design'd to regulate them. It were therefore a work worthy another inspired writing, to attemt the rescue of this, and recover it to its just estimate. Yet alas, could we hope for that, we have scoffers who would as well despise the New as the Old; and like the Husbandmen in the Gospel, *Matt.* 21. 36. would answer such a succession of messages by repeting the same injuries.

Human oratory cannot hope to succeed where Divine has fail'd.

9. To such as these 'tis I confess vain for man to address; nay 'twere insolence to expect that human Oratory would succeed where the Divine fails; yet the spreading infection of these renders it necessary to administer antidotes to others. And besides, tho (God be blest) all are not of this form, yet there are many who, tho not arriv'd to this contemt, yet want som degrees of that just reverence they owe the sacred Scriptures, who give confus'd general assent to them as the word of God, but afford them not a consideration and respect answerable to such an acklowledgment. To such as these, I shall hope it may not be utterly vain to attemt the exciting of those drowsy notions that lie unactive in them; by presenting to them som considerations concerning the excellence and use of the Scripture: which being all but necessary consequences of that principle they are supposed to own, *viz.* that they are Gods word, I cannot much question their assent to the speculative part: I wish I could as probably assure my self of the practic.

This therefore is to be the first and principal consideration.

10. Indeed were there nothing else to be said in behalf of holy Writ, but that it is Gods word, that were enough to command the most awful regard to it. And therefore it is but just we make that the first and principal consideration in our present discourse. But then 'tis impossible that that can want others to attend it; since whatsoever God saith, is in all respects completely good. I shall therefore to that of its Divine original add secondly the consideration of its subject Matter; thirdly, of its excellent and no less diffusive end & design; and fourthly, of its exact propriety and fitness to that design: which are all such qualifications, that where they concur, nothing more can be requir'd to commend a writing to the esteem of rational men. And upon all these tests, notwithstanding the cavil of the Romanists and others, whose force we shall examin with the unhappy issue of contrary counsels, this law of God will be found to answer the Psalmists character of it, *Psal.* 19. 7. *The Law of God is perfect:* and 'twill appear that the custody and use thereof is the Birth-right and Duty of every Christian. All which severals being faithfully deduced, it will only remain that I add such cautions as will be necessary to the due performance of the aforesaid duty, and our being in som degree render'd perfect, as this Law of God, and the Author thereof himself is perfect, *Matt.* 5. 48.

SECT. II.

The Divine Original, Endearments, and Authority of the Holy Scripture.

In human affairs the principal motive of credibility is the credit of the speaker.

1. MEns judgements are so apt to be biast by their affections, that we often find them readier to consider who speaks, then what is spoken: a temper very unsafe, and the principle of great injustice in our inferior transactions with men; yet here there are very few of us that can wholly divest our selves of it, whereas, when we deal with God (in whom alone an implicit faith may securely be repos'd) we are nice and wary, bring our scales and mesures, will take nothing upon his word which holds not weight in our own balance. 'Tis true, he needs not our partiality to be *justified in his sayings*, Psal. 51. 4. *His words are pure, even as the silver tried seven times in the fire*, Psal. 12. 6. able to pass the strictest test that right reason (truly so called) can put them to. Yet it shews a great perverseness in our nature, that we who so easily resign our understandings to fallible men, stand thus upon our guard against God; make him dispute for every inch he gains on us; nor will afford him what we daily grant to any credible man, to receive an affirmation upon trust of his veracity.

When we are commanded to search the Scripture, 'tis in reference to the meaning, and not the truth of what is said.

2. I am far from contradicting our Saviors Precept, of *Search the Scriptures*, John 7. or Saint *Pauls*, of *proving all things*, 1 Thess. 5. 21. we cannot be too industrious in our inquest after truth, provided we still reserve to God the decisive vote, and humbly acquiesce in his sense, how distant soever from our own; so that when we consult Scripture (I may add Reason either) 'tis not to resolve us whether God be to be believed or no in what he has said, but whether he hath said such and such things: for if we are convinc'd he have; Reason as well as Religion commands our assent.

Whatever God has said we are to pay it a reverence merely upon the account of its author.

3. Whatever therefore God has said, we are to pay it a reverence merely upon the account of its Author, over and above what the excellence of the matter exacts: and to this we have all inducements as well as obligation: there being no motives to render the words of men estimable to us, which are not eminently and transcendently appliable to those of God.

He speaks with the authority of a parent.

4. Those motives we may reduce to four: first, the Authority of the Speaker; secondly, his Kindness; thirdly, his Wisdom; and fourthly, his Truth. First, for that of Autority: that may be either native, or acquired; the native is that of a parent, which is such a charm of observance, that we see *Solomon*, when he would impress his counsels, assumes the person of a Father; *Hear O my children the instructions of a Father*, Prov. 4. 1. And generally thro that whole Book he uses the compellation of my Son, as the greatest endearment to engage attention and reverence. Nay so indispensible was the obligation of children in this respect, that we see the contumacious child that would not hearken to the advice of his Parents, was by God himself adjudged to death, *Deut.* 21. 20.

The father not only of our Persons, but also of our nature.

5. Nor have only Gods, but mens Laws exacted that filial reverence to the dictats of Parents. But certainly no Parent can pretend such a title to it as God, who is not only the immediat Father of our persons, but the original Father of our very nature; not only of our flesh, but of our spirits also, *Heb.* 12. 9. So that the Apostles Antithesis in that place is as properly applied to counsels as corrections; and we may as rightly infer, that if we give reverence to the advices of our earthly Parents, *much more ought*

we

we ſubject our ſelves to this Father of our ſpirits. And we have the very ſame reaſon wherewith to enforce it: for *the Fathers of our fleſh do* as often dictate, as *correct according to their own pleſures*, preſcribe to their children not according to the exact meſures of right and wrong, but after that humor which moſt predominates in themſelves. But God alwaies directs his admonitions to our profit, *that we may be partakers of his holineſs*, Heb. 12. 11. So that we are as unkind to our ſelves, as irreverent towards him, whenever we let any of his words fall to the ground; whoſe claim to this part of our reverence is much more irrefragable then that of our natural Parents.

He has beſides, the authority of a King, and Prince.

6. But beſides this native Autority there is alſo an acquired; and that we may diſtinguiſh into two ſorts: the one of dominion, the other of reputation. To the firſt kind belongs that of Princes, Magiſtrates, Maſters, or any that have coercive power over us. And our own intereſt teaches us not to ſlight the words of any of theſe, who can ſo much to our coſt ſecond them with deeds. Now God has all theſe titles of jurisdiction; He is the great King, *Pſal.* 48. 2. Nor was it only a complement of the Pſalmiſts; for himſelf owns the ſtile, *I am a great King*, Mal. 1. *He is the Judg of all the World*, Gen. 18. yea that *Ancient of daies*, before whom the Books were open'd, *Dan.* 7. 10. He is our Lord and Maſter by right, both of Creation and Redemtion; and this Chriſt owns even in his ſtate of inanition; yea, when he was about the moſt ſervile emploiment, the waſhing his Diſciples feet, when he was moſt literally in the form of a ſervant; yet he ſcruples not to aſſert his right to that oppoſite title: *You call me Maſter, and Lord; and ye ſay well, for ſo I am*; John 13. Nor are theſe emty names, but effectively attended with all the power they denote. Yet ſo ſtupid are we, that whilſt we awfully receive the dictates of our earthly Superiors, we ſlight and neglect the Oracles of that God who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. When a Prince ſpeaks, we are apt to cry out with *Herods* Flatterers, *the voice of a God, and not of a man*, Acts 12. Yet when it is indeed the voice of God, we chuſe to liſten to any thing elſe rather then it. But let us ſadly remember, that notwithſtanding our contemts, this word ſhall (as our Savior tells us) *judg us at the laſt day*, John 12. 48.

Of his inherent excellencies.

7. A ſecond ſort of acquir'd Autority is that of reputation. When a man is famed for ſom extraordinary excellences, whether moral or intellectual, men come with appetite to his diſcourſes, greedily ſuck them in, nor need ſuch a one beſpeak attention; his very name has don it for him, and prepoſſeſt him of his Auditors regard. Thus the Rabbies among the Jews, the Philoſophers among the Greeks, were liſtened to as Oracles, and to cite them was (by their admiring Diſciples) thought a concluding Argument. Nay, under Chriſtianity, this admiration of mens perſons has bin ſo inordinate, that it has crumbled Religion away in little inſignificant parties; whilſt not only *Paul*, *Apollo* or *Cephas*, but names infinitly inferior, have become the diſtinctive characters of Sects and ſeparate Communions. So eaſily alas are we charm'd by our prepoſſeſſions, and with itching ears run in queſt of thoſe doctrins which the fame of their Authors, rather then the evidence of truth, commend to us.

And where theſe motives all concurr, their obligation is ſo much the greater.

8. And hath God don nothing to get him a repute among us? has he no excellences to deſerve our eſteem? is he not worthy to preſcribe to his own creatures? If we think yes, why is he the only perſon to be diſregarded? or why do we ſo unſeaſonably depart from our own humor, as not to give his Word a reverence proportionable to that we pretend for him; nay, which we actually pay to men of like paſſions with our ſelves? A contemt ſo abſurd as well as impious, that we have not the example of any

the most barbarous people to countenance us. For tho som of them have made very wild mistakes in the choice of their Deities, yet they have all agreed in this common principle, that whatever those Deities said, was to be receiv'd with all possible veneration; yea, such a deference gave they to all significations of the Divine will, that as they would undertake no great enterprize without consulting their Auguries; so upon any inauspicious signs they relinquisht their attemts. And certainly if we had the same reverence for the true God which they had for the false, we should as frequently consult him. We may do it with much more ease and certainty: we need not trust to the entrails of Beasts, or motion of Birds: we need not go to *Delphos*, or the Lybian *Hammon* for the resolving our doubts: but what *Moses* said to *Israel* is very applicable to us, *the Word is nigh thee*, Deut. 30. 14. That Word which *David* made his *Counsellor*, Psal. 119. 24. his *Comforter*, verse 50. his *Tresure*, verse 72. his *Study*, v. 99. And had we those awful apprehensions of God which he had, we should pay the like reverence to his Word. Did we well ponder how many titles of Autority he has over us, we should surely be asham'd to deny that respect to him in whom they all conspire, which we dare not deny to them separately in human Superiors.

A second motive for the esteem of words is the kindness of the speaker.

9. A second motive to esteem mens words, is the kindness of the speaker. This has such a fascinating power, as nothing but extreme ill nature can resist. When a man is assur'd of the kindness of him that speaks, whatever is spoken is taken in good part. This is it that distinguishes the admonitions of a friend from the reproches of an enemy; and we daily in common conversation receive those things with contentment and applause from an intimate and familiar, which if spoken by a stranger or enemy, would be despis'd or stomach'd. So insinuating a thing is kindness, that where it has once got it self believ'd, nothing it saies after is disputed; it supples the mind, and makes it ductile and pliant to any impressions.

Human kindness bears no proportion to the Divine.

10. But what human kindness is there that can come in any competition with the Divine? it surpasses that of the neareſt and deareſt relations; *Mothers may forget, yet will I not forget thee*, Isa. 49. 15. And the Psalmist found it experimentally true, *When my Father and my Mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up*, Psal. 27. 10. The tenderests bowels compared to his, are adamant and flint: so that 'tis a most proper epithet the Wise man gives him, *O Lord thou lover of souls*, Wisd. 11. 26. Nor is this affection merely mental, but it attests it self by innumerable effects. The effects of love are all reducible to two heads, doing and suffering; and by both these God has most eminently attested his love to us.

Whither we consider our souls or bodies, our creation or redemption.

11. For the first, we cannot look either on our bodies or our souls, on the whole Universe about us, or that better World above us; but we shall in each see *the Lord hath don great things for us*, Psal. 114. Nay, not only our enjoiments, but even the capacity to enjoy, is his bounty. Had not he drawn mankind out of his original clay, what had we bin concern'd in all the other works of his Creation? So that if we put any value either upon what we have or what we are, we cannot but account our selves so much indebted to this his active love. And tho the passive was not practicable by the Divine Nature simply and apart, yet that we might not want all imaginable evidences of his love, he who was God blessed for ever, linkt his impassible to our passible nature; assum'd our humanity, that he might espouse our sorrows, and was born on purpose that he might die for us. So that sure we may say in his own words, *greater love then this hath no man*, John 15. 13.

12. And

12. And now 'tis very hard, if ſuch an unparellel'd love in God may not as much affect us, as the ſlight benefactions of every ordinary friend; if it cannot ſo much recommend him to our regard, as to reſcue his word from contemt, and diſpoſe us to receive impreſſions from it; eſpecially when his very ſpeaking is a new act of his kindneſs, and deſign'd to our greateſt advantage. *And 'tis very hard if ſuch obligations cannot reſcue his word from contemt.*

13. But if all he has don and ſuffer'd for us cannot obtain him ſo much from us, we muſt ſurely confeſs, our diſingenuity is as ſuperlative as his love. For in this inſtance we have no plea for our ſelves. The diſcourſes of men, 'tis true, may ſomtime be ſo weak and irrational, that tho kindneſs may ſuggeſt pity, it cannot reverence: but this can never happen in God, whoſe wiſdom is as infinite as his love. He talks not at our vain rate who often talk only for talkings ſake: but his words are directed to the moſt important ends, and addreſt in ſuch a manner as befits him in whom are *all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledg*, Col. 2. 3. And this is our third conſideration, the wiſdom of the Speaker. *We pay a reſpect to a friends diſcourſe, tho weak & irrational, which cannot happen in God.*

14. How attractive a thing Wiſdom is, we may obſerve in the inſtance of *the Queen of Sheba*, who *came from the utmoſt parts of the earth*, as Chriſt ſaies Matt. 12. 42. *to hear the Wiſdom of Solomon.* And the like is noted of the *Greek* Sages, that they were addreſt to from all parts, by perſons of all ranks and qualities, to hear their Lectures. And indeed the rational nature of man do's by a kind of ſympathetic motion cloſe with whatever hath the ſtamp of reaſon upon it. But alas, what is the profoundeſt wiſdom of men, compar'd with that of God? He is the eſſential reaſon; and all that man can pretend to, is but an emanation from him; a ray of his Sun, a drop of his Ocean: which as he gives, ſo he can alſo take away. He can infatuate the moſt ſubtil Deſigners; and (as he ſaies of himſelf) *makes the diviners mad, turns the wiſe men back, and makes their wiſdom fooliſhneſs*, Iſaiah 44. 25. *Human wiſdom can attract ſcholars and admirers, which has no value if compar'd with God's.*

15. How impious a folly is it then in us, to Idolize human Wiſdom with all its imperfections, and deſpiſe the Divine? yet this every man is guilty of, who is not attracted to the ſtudy of ſacred Writ by the ſupereminent wiſdom of its Author. For ſuch men muſt either affirm that God has not ſuch a ſupereminency; or that, tho he have in himſelf, he hath not exerted it in this writing: the former is down-right blaſphemy; and truly the later is the ſame, a little varied. For that any thing but what is exactly wiſe, can proceed from infinite Wiſdom, is too abſurd for any man to imagin. And therefore he that charges God's Word with defect of wiſdom, muſt interpretatively charge God ſo too. For tho 'tis true, a wiſe man may ſomtimes ſpeak fooliſhly; yet that happens thro that mixture of ignorance or paſſion, which is in the moſt knowing of mortals: but in God, who is a pure Act, and eſſential Wiſdom, that is an impoſſible ſuppoſition. *'Tis impious folly to idolize human wiſdom and deſpiſe Divine.*

16. Nay, indeed it were to tax him of folly beyond what is incident to any ſenſible man, who will ſtill proportion his inſtruments to the work he deſigns. Should we not conclude him mad, that ſhould attemt to fell a mighty Oak with a Pen-knife, or ſtop a Torrent with a wiſp of ſtraw? And ſure their conceptions are not much more reverend of God, who can ſuppoſe that a writing deſign'd by him for ſuch important ends, as the *making men wiſe unto ſalvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. *the caſting down all that exalts it ſelf againſt the obedience of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. ſhould it ſelf be fooliſh and weak: or that he ſhould give it thoſe great Attributes of being *ſharper than a two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit,* *That word which is intended to make wiſe to ſalvation.*

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of the joints and marrow, Heb. 4. 12. if its discourses were so flat and insipid, as some in this profane Age would represent them.

Tho it pretends not to teach the wisdom of this world, it guides in a better.

17. 'Tis true indeed, 'tis not, as the Apostle speaks, the *wisdom of this world*, 1 Cor. 2. 6. The Scripture teaches us not the arts of undermining Governments, defrauding and circumventing our brethren; but it teaches us that which would tend much more even to our temporal felicity; and as reason promts us to aspire to happiness, so it must acknowledg, that is the highest wisdom which teaches us to attain it.

The Scripture is recommended also by the veracity of its Author.

18. And as the holy Scripture is thus recommended to us by the Wisdom of its Author, so in the last place it is by his truth, without which the other might rather raise our jealousy than our reverence. For wisdom without sincerity degenerates into serpentine guile, and we rather fear to be ensnar'd than hope to be advantag'd by it. The most subtil addresses, and most cogent arguments prevail not upon us, where we suspect some insidious design. But where wisdom and fidelity meet in the same person, we do not only attend, but confide in his counsels. And this qualification is most eminently in God. *The children of men are deceitful upon the weights.* Psalm 62. 9. Much guile often lurks indiscernibly under the fairest appearances; but God's veracity is as essentially himself as his wisdom, and he can no more deceive us, than he can be deceiv'd himself. *He is not a man that he should lie*, Num. 23. 19. He designs not (as men often do) to sport himself with our credulity, and raise hopes which he never means to satisfy: *he saies not to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain*, Isaiah 45. 19. but all his *promises are yea and Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. He is perfectly sincere in all the proposals he makes in his Word, which is a most rational motive for us to advert to it, not only with reverence but love.

We must be very inexcusable, if so many motives combin'd cannot prevail with us.

19. And now when all these motives are thus combin'd, the autority, the kindness, the wisdom, the veracity of the speaker, what can be requir'd more to render his words of weight with us? If this four-fold cord will not draw us, we have sure the strength, not of men, but of that Legion we read of in the Gospel, *Mark* 5. 9. For these are so much the cords of a man, so adapted to our natures, nay to our constant usage in other things that we must put off much of our humanity, disclaim the common measures of mankind, if we be not attracted by them. For I dare appeal to the breast of any sober, industrious man, whether in case a person, who he were sure had all the fore-mention'd qualifications, should recommend to him some rules as infallible for the certain doubling or trebling his estate, he would not think them worth the pursuing; nay, whether he would not plod and study on them, till he comprehended the whole Art. And shall we then when God, in whom all those qualifications are united, and that in their utmost transcendences, shall we, I say, think him below our regard, when he proposes the improving our interests, not by the scanty proportions of two or three; but in such as he intimated to *Abraham*, when he shew'd him the Stars, as the representative of his numerous off-spring, *Gen.* 15. 5. when he teaches us that highest, & yet most certain Alchymy of refining and multiplying our enjoiments, and then perpetuating them?

In secular occasions we are more easy, if one comes in his own name, him we receive.

20. All this God do's in Scripture, and we must be stupidly improvident, if we will take no advantage by it. It was once the complaint of Christ to the *Jews, I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive*, John 5. 43. And what was said by him the Eternal essential Word, is no less applicable to the Written; which coming in the name, and upon the message of God, is despis'd and slighted, and every the lightest composure of men preferr'd before it. As

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if that ſignature of Divinity it carries, ſerved rather as a Brand to ſtigmatize and defame, than adorn and recommend it. A contemt which ſtrikes immediatly at God himſelf, whoſe reſentments of it, tho for the preſent ſuppreſt by his long-ſuffering, will at laſt break out upon all who perſevere ſo to affront him in a *judgment worthy of God*, Wiſ. 12. 26.

To ſuppoſe & take as granted the Divine Original of the Holy Scripture is thought to be begging the queſtion.

21. But after all that has bin ſaid, I foreſee ſome may ſay, that I have all this while but beaten the air, have built upon a principle which ſome flatly deny, others doubt of, and have run away with a ſuppoſition that the Bible is of Divine Original, without any attemt of proof. To ſuch as theſe I might juſtly enough object the extreme hard meſure they offer to Divinity above all other Sciences. For in thoſe they ſtill allow ſome fundamental maxims, which are preſuppoſed without proof; but in this they admit of no *Poſtulata*, no granted principle on which to ſuperſtruct. If the ſame rigor ſhould be extended to ſecular caſes, what a damp would it ſtrike upon commerce? For example, a man expects fair dealing from his neighbor, upon the ſtrength of thoſe common notions of Juſtice he preſumes writ in all mens hearts: but according to this meſure, he muſt firſt prove to every man he deals with, that ſuch notions there are, and that they are obligatory: that the wares expos'd to ſale are his own; that dominion is not founded in grace, or that he is in that ſtate, and ſo has a property to confer upon another; that the perſon dealt with, paies a juſt price; do's it in good mony; and that it is his own; or that he is in the ſtate of grace; or needs not be ſo, to juſtify his purchaſe, and at this rate the Market will be as full of nice queſtions as the Scholes. But becauſe complaints and retortions are the common refuge of cauſes that want better Arguments, I ſhall not inſiſt here; but proceed to a defence of the queſtion'd Aſſertion, that the Bible is the Word of God.

That the Bible is the word of God, is evinc'd by ſeveral waies of proof.

22. In which I ſhall proceed by theſe degrees. Firſt, I ſhall lay down the plain grounds upon which Chriſtians believe it. Secondly, I ſhall compare thoſe with thoſe of leſs credibility which have generally ſatisfied mankind in other things of the like nature. And thirdly, I ſhall conſider whether thoſe who are diſſatisfied with thoſe grounds, would not be equally ſo with any other way of atteſtation.

Such as are to be expected in matters of fact.

23. Before I enter upon the firſt of theſe, I deſire it may be conſider'd, that matters of fact are not capable of ſuch rigorous demonſtrative evidences, as mathematical propoſitions are. To render a thing fit for rational belief, there is no more requir'd, but that the motives for it do over-poiſe thoſe againſt it; and in that degree they do ſo, ſo is the belief ſtronger or weaker.

Which can only be proved by Teſtimony.

24. Now the motives of our belief in the preſent caſe, are ſuch as are extrinſic, or intrinſic to the Scriptures; of which the extrinſic are firſt, and preparative to the other; and indeed all that can reaſonably be inſiſted on to a gain-ſaier, who muſt be ſuppos'd no competent judg of the later. But as to the former, I ſhall adventure to ſay, that the Divine Original of the Scripture hath as great grounds of credibility as can be expected in any thing of this kind. For whether God inſpir'd the Pen-men of Holy Writ, is matter of fact, and being ſo, is capable of no other external evidence but that of teſtimony: and that matter of fact being alſo in point of time ſo remote from us, can be judg'd of only by a ſeries of Teſtimonies deriv'd from that Age wherein the Scriptures were written to this: and the more credible the Teſtifiers, and the more univerſal the Teſtimony; ſo much the more convincing are they to all conſidering men.

Which atteſtation the Scripture has with great advantage.

25. And this atteſtation the Scripture hath in the higheſt circumſtances, it having bin witneſſed to in all Ages, and in thoſe Ages by all perſons that could be preſum'd to know any thing of it. Thus the Old Teſtament was own'd by the whole Nation of the *Jews*, as the writings of men inſpir'd by God, and that with ſuch evidence of their miſſion, as abundantly ſatisfied thoſe of that Age, of their being ſo inſpir'd; and they deriv'd thoſe Writings with that atteſtation to their poſterity. Now that thoſe of the firſt Ages were not deceiv'd, is as morally certain as any thing can be ſuppos'd. For in the firſt part of the Bible is contain'd the hiſtory of thoſe miracles wherewith God reſcued that people out of *Egypt*, and inſtated them in *Canaan*. Now if they who liv'd at that time, knew that ſuch miracles were never don, 'tis impoſſible they could receive an evident Fable as an inſpir'd truth. No ſingle perſon, much leſs a whole Nation can be ſuppos'd ſo ſtupid. But if indeed they were eie-witneſſes of thoſe miracles, they might with very good reaſon conclude, that the ſame *Moſes* who was by God impower'd to work them, was ſo alſo for the relating them; as alſo all thoſe precedent events from the Creation down to that time, which are recorded by him.

Particularly the Law of Moſes.

26. So alſo for the preceptive parts of thoſe Books, thoſe that ſaw thoſe formidable ſolemnities, with which they were firſt publiſh'd, had ſure little temtation to doubt that they were the dictats of God, when writen. Now if they could not be deceiv'd themſelves, 'tis yet leſs imaginable that they ſhould conſpire to impoſe a cheat upon their poſterities; nor indeed were the *Jews* of ſo eaſy a credulity, that 'tis at all probable the ſucceeding Generations would have bin ſo impos'd on: their humor was ſtubborn enough, and the precepts of their Law ſevere and burdenſom enough to have temted them to have caſt off the yoke, had it not bin bound upon them by irreſiſtible convictions of its coming from God. But beſides this Tradition of their Elders, they had the advantage of living under a Theocracy, the immediat guidance of God; Prophets daily rais'd up among them, to fore-tell events, to admoniſh them of their duty, and reprove their backſlidings: yet even theſe gave the deference to the writen Word; nay, made it the teſt by which to try true inſpirations from falſe: *To the Law and to the Teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to it, there is no light in them*, Iſaiah 8. 20. So that the veneration which they had before acquir'd, was ſtill anew excited by freſh inſpirations, which both atteſted the old, and became new parts of their Canon.

And Propheticall writings, who have a great confirmation by their completion: & the care of the Jews in the cuſtody of the Scripture, and the many verſions are farther ſepiments.

27. Nor could it be eſteem'd a ſmall confirmation to the Scriptures, to find in ſucceeding Ages the ſignal accompliſhments of thoſe prophecies which were long before regiſtred in thoſe Books; for nothing leſs than Divine Power and Wiſdom could fore-tell, and alſo verify them. Upon theſe grounds the *Jews* univerſally thro all ſucceſſions receiv'd the Books of the Old Teſtament as Divine Oracles, & lookt upon them as the greateſt truſt that could be committed to them: and accordingly were ſo ſcrupulouſly vigilant in conſerving them, that their *Maſorits* numbred not only the ſections, but the very words, nay letters, that no fraud or inadvertency might corrupt or defalk the leaſt iota of what they eſteem'd ſo ſacred. A farther teſtimony and ſepiment to which, were the Samaritan, Chaldee, and Greek verſions: which being made uſe of in the Synagogs of *Jews*, in their diſperſions, and the *Samaritans* at *Sichem*, could not at thoſe diſtances receive a uniform alteration, and any other would be of no effect. Add to this, that the Original exemplar of the Law was laid up in the Sanctuary, that the Prince was to have a Copy of it alwaies by him, and

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tranſcribe it with his own hand; that every *Jew* was to make it his conſtant diſcourſe and meditation, teach it his children, and wear part of it upon his hands and forehead. And now ſure 'tis impoſſible to imagin any matter of fact to be more carefully deduced, or irrefragably teſtified, nor any thing believ'd upon ſtronger evidence.

The Jews of the preſent age are a farther evidence.

28. That all this is true in reference to the *Jews*, that they did thus own theſe Writings as Divine, appears not only by the Records of paſt Ages, but by the *Jews* of the preſent, who ſtill own them, and cannot be ſuſpected of combination with the *Chriſtians*. And if theſe were reaſonable grounds of conviction to the *Jews*, (as he muſt be moſt abſurdly ſceptical that ſhall deny) they muſt be ſo to *Chriſtians* alſo, who derive them from them: and that with this farther advantage to our Faith, that we ſee the clear completion of thoſe Evangelical prophecies which remain'd dark to them, and conſequently have a farther Argument to confirm us, that the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are certainly Divine.

The New Teſtament has the like means of probation aſſerted at firſt by Miracle.

29. The new has alſo the like means of probation: which as it is a collection of the doctrin taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, muſt if truly related be acknowledged no leſs Divine than what they orally deliver'd. So that they who doubt its being Divine, muſt either deny what Chriſt and his Apoſtles preacht to be ſo, or elſe diſtruſt the fidelity of the relation: the former ſtrikes at the whole Chriſtian Faith; which if only of men, muſt not only be fallible, but is actually a deceit, whilſt it pretends to be of God, and is not. To ſuch Objectors we have to oppoſe thoſe ſtupendous miracles with which the Goſpel was atteſted; ſuch as demonſtrated a more than human efficacy. And that God ſhould lend his Omnipotence to abet the falſe pretentions of men, is a conceit too unworthy even for the worſt of men to entertain.

Which are above the pretences of Impoſters.

30. 'Tis true, there have bin by God permitted lying miracles, as well as true ones have bin don by him; ſuch as were thoſe of the Magicians in *Egypt*, in oppoſition to the other of *Moſes*; but then the difference between both was ſo conſpicuous, that he muſt be more partial & diſingenuous, than even thoſe Magicians were, who would not acknowledg the diſparity, and confeſs in thoſe which were truly ſupernatural, *the finger of God*, Exod. 8. 19. Therefore both in the Old & New Teſtament it is predicted, that *falſe Prophets ſhould ariſe, and do ſigns and wonders*, Deut. 13. 1. Matt. 24. 11, 24. as a trial of their fidelity who made profeſſion of Religion; whether they would prefer the few & trivial ſleights which recommend a deceiver, before thoſe great and numberleſs miracles which atteſted the ſacred Oracles deliver'd to the ſons of men by the God of truth. Whether the trick of a *Barchochebas*, to hold fire in his mouth; that of *Marcus* the heretic, to make the Wine of the Holy Sacrament appear blood; or that of *Mahomet*, to bring a Pidgeon to his ear, ought to be put in balance againſt all the miracles wrought by *Moſes*, our Savior, or his Apoſtles. And in a word; whether the ſilly ſtories which *Iamblichus* ſolemnly relates of *Pythagoras*, or thoſe *Philoſtratus* tells of *Apollonius Tyaneus*, deſerve to rival thoſe of the Evangeliſts. It is a moſt juſt judgment, & accordingly threatned by Almighty God, that they who would *not obey the truth, ſhould believe a lie*, 2 Theſ. 2. 11. But ſtill the Almighty, *where any man* or devil *doth proudly, is* evidently *above him*, Ex. 18. 11. *will be juſtified in his ſayings, and be clear when he is judged*, Rom. 3. 4.

The Witneſſes of the firſt miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles were credible.

31. But if men will be Sceptics, and doubt every thing, they are to know that the matter call'd into queſtion, is of a nature that admits but two waies of ſolution; probability, and teſtimony. Firſt for probability, let it be conſider'd, who were the firſt Promulgers of Chriſt's miracles.

racles. In his life time they were either the patients on whom his miracles were wrought, or the common people that were spectators: the former, as they could not be deceiv'd themselves, but must needs know whether they were cur'd or no; so what imaginable design could they have to deceive others? Many indeed have pretended impotency as a motive of compassion; but what could they gain by owning a cure they had not? As for the Spectators, as their multitude adds to their credibility, (it being morally impossible that so many should at once be deluded in a matter so obvious to their senses) so do's it also acquit them from fraud and combination. Cheats and forgeries are alwaies hatcht in the dark, in close Cabals, and privat Juncto's. That five thousand men at one time, and four thousand at another should conspire to say, that they were miraculously fed, when they were not; and all prove true to the fiction, and not betray it, is a thing as irrational to be suppos'd, as impossible to be parallel'd.

Had no end to temt to forgery.

32. Besides, admit it possible that so many could have join'd in the deceit, yet what imaginable end could they have in it? Had their lie bin subservient to the designs of some potent Prince that might have rewarded it, there had bin some temtation: but what could they expect from the reputed son of a Carpenter, who had not himself where to lay his head? Nay, who disclaim'd all secular power; convei'd himself away from their importunities, when they would have forc'd him to be a King: and consequently, could not be lookt on as one that would head a Sedition, or attemt to raise himself to a capacity of rewarding his Abettors. Upon all these considerations there appears not the least shadow of probability, that either those particular persons who publish'd the cures they had receiv'd, or those multitudes who were witnesses and divulgers of those, or his other miracles, could do it upon any sinister design, or indeed upon any other motive, but gratitude and admiration.

But all secular motives to engage their silence.

33. In the next place, if we come to those miracles which succeeded Christ's death, those most important, & convincing, of his Resurrection and Ascention, & observe who were the Divulgers of those, we shall find them very unlikely to be men of design; a set of illiterate men, taken from the Fisher-Boats, and other mean occupations: and such as needed a miracle as great as any of those they were to assert (the descent of the Holy Ghost) to fit them for their office. What alas could they drive at, or how could they hope that their testimony could be receiv'd, so much against the humor and interest of the present Rulers; unless they were assur'd not only of the truth of the things, but also of some supernatural aids to back and fortify them? Accordingly we find, that till they had receiv'd those; till by the descent of the Holy Ghost they were *endued with power from on high*, Luke 24.49. they never attemted the discovery of what they had seen: but rather hid themselves, kept all their assemblies in privacy and concealment, *for fear of the Jews*, John 20. 19. and so were far enough from projecting any thing besides their own safety. Afterwards, when they began to preach, they had early essays, what their secular advantages would be by it; threatnings and revilings, scurgings and imprisonments, *Acts* 4.21. 5.18,40. And can it be imagin'd, that men who a little before had shew'd themselves so little in love with suffering, that none of them durst stick to their Master at his apprehension, but one forswore, and all forsook him; can it, I say, be imagin'd that these men should be so much in love with their own Fable, as to venture all sorts of persecution for the propagating it? Or if they could, let us in the next place consider what probability there could be of succes

34. Their

34. Their preaching amounted to no leſs then the Deifying of one, whom both their Roman and Jewiſh Rulers; nay, the generality of the people had executed as a malefactor: ſo that they were all engag'd, in defence of their own Act, to ſift their teſtimony with all the rigor that conſcious jealouſy could ſuggeſt. And where were ſo many concern'd inquiſitors, there was very little hope for a forgery to paſs. Beſides the avow'd diſpleſure of their Governors made it a hazardous thing to own a belief of what they aſſerted. Thoſe that adher'd to them could not but know, that at the ſame time they muſt eſpouſe their dangers and ſufferings. And men uſe not to incur certain miſchiefs, upon doubtful and ſuſpicious grounds. *Their preaching oppos'd by the Roman and Jewiſh rulers.*

35. Yet farther, their doctrin was deſign'd to an end to which their Auditors could not but have the greateſt reluctancy: they were to ſtruggle with that rooted prepoſſeſſion which the Jews had for the Moſaical Law, which their Goſpel out-dated; and the Gentiles for the Rites and Religion of their Anceſtors; and, which was harder then either, with the corruptions and vices of both: to plant humility and internal ſanctity, ſo contrary to that ceremonial holineſs, upon which the Jews ſo valued themſelves, and deſpis'd others: and Temperance, Juſtice, and Purity, ſo contrary to the practice, nay, even the religion of the Heathen; and to attemt all this with no other allurement, no other promiſe of recompence but what they muſt attend in another world, and paſs too through reproches and afflictions, torments and death. Theſe were all ſuch invincible prejudices, as they could never hope to break thorow with a lie; nay, which they could not have encounter'd even with every common truth, but only with that, which being Divine, brought its aids with it; without which 'twas utterly impoſſible for all the skill or oratory of men to overcome ſuch diſadvantages. *And all ſecular intereſts of their Auditors.*

36. And yet with all theſe did theſe rude inartificial men conteſt, and that with ſignal ſucceſs: no leſs then three thouſand Proſelytes made by Saint *Peters* firſt Sermon; and that in *Jeruſalem*, the Scene where all was acted, and conſequently where 'twas the moſt impoſſible to impoſe a forgery. And at the like miraculous rate they went on, till as the Phariſees themſelves complain, they had *filled Jeruſalem with their doctrin*, Acts 5. 28. nor did *Judea* ſet bounds to them, *their ſound went out into all Nations*, Rom. 10. 18. and their doctrin ſpred it ſelf through all the Gentile world. *The ſucceſs of their preaching is a farther evidence in its behalf.*

37. And ſure ſo wonderful an event, ſo contrary to all human meſures, do's ſufficiently evince there was more then man in it. Nothing but the ſame creative Power that produc'd light out of darkneſs, could bring forth effects ſo much above the proportion of the cauſe. Had theſe weak inſtruments acted only by their natural powers, nothing of this had bin atchiev'd. Alas could theſe poor rude men learn all Languages within the ſpace of fifty daies, which would take up almoſt as many years of the moſt induſtrious Student, and yet had they not bin able to ſpeak them, they could never have divulg'd the Goſpel to the ſeveral Nations, nor ſo effectually have convinc'd the by-ſtanders, *Acts* 2. that they acted by a higher impulſe. And to convince the world they did ſo, they repeted their Maſters miracles as well as his doctrin; heal'd the ſick, caſt out devils, rais'd the dead. And where God communicated ſo much of his power, we may reaſonably conclude he did it to promote his own work, not the work of the devil, as it muſt have bin if this whole Scene were a lie. *Which ſhews that there was more then man in it.*

Notwithstanding all credit of history, some are so impudent to suggest that religion is a lately devis'd fable.

38. When all this is weigh'd, I presume there will remain little ground to suspect, that the first planters of Christian Faith had any other design then what they avowed, *viz.* the bringing men to holiness here, and salvation hereafter. The suspicion therefore, if any, must rest upon later times; and accordingly som are willing to perswade themselves and others, that the whole Scheme of our Religion is but a lately devis'd Fable to keep the world in awe, whereof Princes have made som use, but Clergymen more; and that Christ and his Apostles are only actors whom themselves have conjur'd up upon the stage to pursue their plot.

But these surmisers should assign the time when this enterprize first began.

39. In answer to this bold, this blasphemous suggestion, I should first desire these surmisers to point out the time when, and the persons who began this design; to tell us exactly whence they date this politic Religion, as they are pleas'd to suppose it. If they cannot, they are manifestly unjust to reject our account of it when they can give none themselves; and fail very much of that rigid demonstration they require from others. That there is such a profession as Christianity in the world, is yet (God be blest) undeniable; (tho at the rate it has of late declin'd, God knows how long it will be so:) we say it came by Christ and his Apostles, and that it is attested by an uninterrupted testimony of all the intervening Ages, the suffrage of all Christian Churches from that day to this. And sure they who embraced the doctrin, are the most competent witnesses from whence they received it.

Religion, that there might be no place for suspicion, is attested by heathen as well as Jewish or Christian writers.

40. Yet lest they should be all thought parties to the design, and their witness excepted against, it has pleased God to give us collateral assurances, and made both Jewish and Gentile Writers give testimony to the Antiquity of Christianity. *Josephus* do's this, lib. 20. chap. 8. and lib. 18. ch. 4. where, after he has given an account of the crucifixion of Christ exactly agreeing with the Evangelists; he concludes, *And to this day the Christian people, who of him borrow their name, cease not to increase.* I add not the personal elogium which he gives of our Savior; because som are so hardy to controul it: also I pass what *Philo* mentions of the religious in *Egypt*, because several Learned men refer it to the *Essens*, a Sect among the Jews, or som other. There is no doubt of what *Tacitus* and other Roman Historians speak of Christ the Author of the Christian doctrin; which it had bin impossible for him to have don, if there had then bin no such doctrin, or if Christ had not bin known as the Founder of it. So afterward *Pliny* gives the Emperor *Trajan* an account both of the manners, and multitude of the Christians; and makes the innocence of the one, and the greatness of the other, an Argument to slacken the persecution against them. Nay, the very bloody Edicts of the persecuting Emperors, and the scoffs and reproches of *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, *Lucian*, and other profane opposers of this Doctrin, do undeniably assert its being. By all which it appears, that Christianity had in those Ages not only a being, but had also obtain'd mightily in the world, and drawn in vast numbers to its profession: and vast indeed they must needs be, to furnish out that whole Army of Martyrs, of which profane, as well as Ecclesiastic writers speak. And if all this be not sufficient to evince that Christianity stole not clancularly into the world, but took its rise from those times and persons it pretends, we must renounce all faith of testimony, and not believe an inch farther then we see.

The pen-men of the new Testament were such who could not be mistaken in what they wrote.

41. I suppose I need say no more to shew that the Gospel, and all those portentous miracles which attested it, were no forgeries, or stratagems of men. I come now to that doubt which more immediatly concerns the

Holy

Holy Scripture, *viz.* whether all thoſe tranſactions be ſo faithfully related there, that we may believe them to have bin dictated by the ſpirit of God. Now for this, the proceſs need be but ſhort, if we conſider who were the penmen of the New Teſtament; even for the moſt part the Apoſtles themſelves: *Matthew*, and *John* who wrote two of the Goſpels were certainly ſo: and *Mark*, as all the Ancients aver, was but the Amanuenſis to Saint *Peter*, who dictated that Goſpel. Saint *Luke* indeed comes not under this firſt rank of Apoſtles; yet is by ſom affirm'd to be one of the ſeventy Diſciples: however an Apoſtolical perſon 'tis certain he was, and it was no wonder for ſuch to be inſpired. For in thoſe firſt Ages of the Church men acted more by immediat inflation of the Spirit then ſince. And accordingly we find *Stephen*, tho but a Deacon, had the power of miracles; and preacht as divinely as the prime Apoſtles, *Acts* 7. And the gift of the Holy Ghoſt was then a uſual concomitant of converſion, as appears in the Story of *Cornelius* Acts 10. 45, 46. Beſides, Saint *Luke* was a conſtant attendant on Saint *Paul* (who derived the Faith *not from man, but by the* immediat *revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, as himſelf profeſſes, *Gal.* 1. 12.) and is by ſom ſaid to have wrote by dictat from him, as *Mark* did from Saint *Peter*. Then as to the Epiſtles they all bear the names of Apoſtles, except that to the Hebrews, which yet is upon very good grounds preſum'd to be Saint *Pauls*. Now theſe were the perſons commiſſionated by Chriſt to preach the Chriſtian doctrin, and were ſignally aſſiſted in the diſcharge of that office; ſo that as he tells them, it was *not they, who ſpake, but the ſpirit of the Father that ſpake in them*, Matt. 23. 11. And if they ſpake by divine inſpiration, there can be no queſtion that they wrote ſo alſo. Nay, indeed of the two, it ſeems more neceſſary they ſhould do the later. For had they err'd in any thing they orally deliver'd, they might have retracted and cured the miſchief: but theſe Books being deſign'd as a ſtanding immutable rule of Faith and Manners to all ſucceſſions, any error in them would have bin irreparable, and have entail'd it ſelf upon poſterity: which agreed neither with the truth, nor goodneſs of God to permit.

That the books were wrote by them whoſe names are inſcrib'd, we are as much aſſur'd of as 'tis poſſible to be and that they are not ſince corrupted.

42. Now that theſe Books were indeed writ by them whoſe names they bear, we have as much aſſurance as 'tis poſſible to have of any thing of that nature, and that diſtance of time from us. For however ſom of them may have bin controverted, yet the greateſt part have admitted no diſpute; whoſe doctrins agreeing exactly with the others, give teſtimony to them. And as to the bulk of thoſe writings, it is notorious that the firſt Chriſtians receiv'd them from the Apoſtles, and ſo tranſmitted them to the enſuing Ages, which receiv'd them with the like eſteem and veneration. *They cannot be corrupted*, ſaies Saint *Auſtin* in the thirty ſecond book against *Fauſtus* the Manich. c. 16. *becauſe they are and have bin in the hands of all Chriſtians. And whoſoever ſhould firſt attemt an alteration, he would be confuted by the inſpection of other ancienter Copies. Beſides, the Scriptures are not in ſom one Language, but tranſlated into many: ſo that the faults of one Book would be corrected by others more ancient, or in a different Tongue.*

The Chriſtians who laid down their lives for thoſe books would not corrupt them, and others could not.

43. And how much the body of Chriſtians were in earneſt concern'd to take care in this matter, appears by very coſtly evidences; multitudes of them chuſing rather to part with their lives then their Bibles. And indeed 'tis a ſufficient proof, that their reverence of that Book was very avowed and manifeſt; when their heathen Perſecutors made that one part of their perſecution. So that as wherever the Chriſtian Faith was receiv'd, this Book was alſo, under the notion we now plead for *viz.* as the

the writings of men inspir'd by God: so it was also contended for even unto death; and to part with the bible was to renounce the Faith. And now, after such a cloud of testimonies, we may sure take up that (ill-applied) saying of the high Priest, *Matt.* 26. 65. *what farther need have we of witnesses.*

There are besides external, internal evidences in behalf of the Scripture.

44. Yet besides these, another sort of witnesses there are, I mean those intrinsic evidences which arise out of the Scripture it self; but of these I think not proper here to insist, partly because the subject will be in a great degree coincident with that of the second general consideration; and partly because these can be argumentative to none who are not qualified to discern them. Let those who doubt the Divine Original of Scripture, well digest the former grounds which are within the verge of reason; and when by those they are brought to read it with due reverence, they will not want Arguments from the Scripture it self to confirm their veneration of it.

It is farther asserted by the common mesures of credibility.

45. In the mean time, to evince how proper the former discourse is to found a rational belief that the Scripture is the Word of God, I shall compare it with those mesures of credibility upon which all human transactions move, and upon which men trust their greatest concerns without diffidence or dispute.

The promulgation of laws, and notices of commerce.

46. That we must in many things trust the report of others, is so necessary, that without it human society cannot subsist. What a multitude of subjects are there in the world, who never saw their Prince, nor were at the making of any Law? if all these should deny their obedience, because they have it only by hear-say, there is such a man, and such Laws, what would become of government? So also for property, if nothing of testimony may be admitted, how shall any man prove his right to any thing? All pleas must be decided by the sword, and we shall fall into that state (which some have fancied the primitive) of universal hostility. In like manner for traffic and commerce; how should any Merchant first attemt a trade to any foreign part of the world, if he did not believe that such a place there was? and how could he believe that, but upon the credit of those who have bin there? Nay indeed how could any man first attemt to go but to the next Market Town, if he did not from the report of others conclude that such a one there was? So that if this universal diffidence should prevail, every man should be a kind of *Plantagnus*, fixt to the soil he first sprung up in. The absurdities are indeed so infinite, and so obvious, that I need not dilate upon them.

'Tis not of moment that the promulgation of laws, and relations of trade, are made by our contemporaries.

47. But it will perhaps be said, that in things that are told us by our contemporaries, and that relate to our own time, men will be less apt to deceive us, because they know 'tis in our power to examin and discover the truth. To this I might say, that in many instances it would scarce quit cost to do so, and the inconveniences of trial would exceed those of belief. But I shall willingly admit this probable Argument, and only desire it may be applied to our main question, by considering whether the primitive Christians, who receiv'd the Scripture as Divine, had not the same security of not being deceiv'd, who had as great opportunities of examining, and the greatest concern of doing it throughly, since they were to engage not only their future hopes in another world, but (that which to nature is much more sensible) all their present enjoiments and even life it self upon the truth of it.

48. But

48. But becauſe it muſt be confeſt that we who are ſo many Ages remov'd from them, have not their means of aſſurance, let us in the next place conſider, whether an aſſent to thoſe teſtimonies they have left behind them, be not warranted by the common practice of mankind in other caſes. Who is there that queſtions there was ſuch a man as *William* the Conqueror in this Iſland? or, to lay the Scene farther, who doubts there was an *Alexander*, a *Julius Cæſar*, an *Auguſtus*? Now what have we to found this confidence on beſides the faith of Hiſtory? And I preſume even thoſe who exact the ſevereſt demonſtrations for Eccleſiaſtic Story, would think him a very impertinent Sceptic that ſhould do the like in theſe. So alſo, as to the Authors of Books; who diſputes whether *Homer* writ the Iliads, or *Virgil* the Æneids, or *Cæſar* the Commentaries, that paſs under their names? yet none of theſe have bin atteſted in any degree like the Scripture. 'Tis ſaid indeed, that *Cæſar* ventur'd his own life to ſave his Commentaries, imploying one hand to hold thoſe above the water, when it ſhould have aſſiſted him in ſwimming. But who ever laid down their lives in atteſtation of that, or any human compoſure, as multitudes of men have don for the Bible?

We allow the ancient hiſtorical accounts of men, actions and books.

49. But perhaps 'twill be ſaid, that the ſmall concern men have, who wrote theſe, or other the like Books, inclines them to acquieſce in the common opinion. To this I muſt ſay, that many things inconſiderable to mankind have oft bin very laborioufly diſcuſt, as appears by many unedifying Volumes, both of Philoſophers and Schole-men. But whatever may be ſaid in this inſtance, 'tis manifeſt there are others, wherein mens real and greateſt intereſts are intruſted to the teſtimonies of former Ages. For example, a man poſſeſſes an eſtate which was bought by his great Grand-father, or perhaps elder progenitor: he charily preſerves that deed of purchaſe, and never looks for farther ſecurity of his title: yet alas, at the rate that men object againſt the Bible, what numberleſs Cavils might be rais'd againſt ſuch a deed? How ſhall it be known that there was ſuch a man as either Seller or Purchaſer? if by the Witneſſes, they are as liable to doubt as the other; it being as eaſy to forge the Atteſtation as the main writing: and yet notwithſtanding all theſe poſſible deceits, nothing but a poſitive proof of forgery can invalidate this deed. Let but the Scripture have the ſame meſure, be allowed to ſtand in force, to be what it pretends to be, till the contrary be (not by ſurmiſes and poſſible conjectures) but by evident proof evinc'd; and its greateſt Advocats will ask no more.

Nor is it of moment to ſay, that in theſe inſtances we give our aſſent, becauſe the things are of ſmall concern.

50. A like inſtance may be given in public concerns: the immunities and rights of any Nation, particularly here of our *Magna Charta*, granted many Ages ſince, and depoſited among the public Records: to make this ſignify any thing, it muſt be taken for granted, that this was without falſification preſerved to our times; yet how eaſy were it to ſuggeſt that in ſo long a ſucceſſion of its keepers, ſome may have bin prevail'd on by the influence of Princes to abridg and curtail its conceſſions; others by a prevailing faction of the people to amplify and extend it? Nay, if men were as great Sceptics in Law, as they are in Divinity, they might exact demonſtrations that the whole thing were not a forgery. Yet, for all theſe poſſible ſurmiſes, we ſtill build upon it, and ſhould think he argued very fallacioufly, that ſhould go to evacuate it, upon the force of ſuch remote ſuppoſitions.

Our immunities, & thoſe of Magna Charta are not of ſlight moment, and are al ow'd to be free f om falſification.

The security we have of the Scripture, is greater than we can have for our national records.

51. Now I desire it may be consider'd whether our security concerning the holy Scripture be not as great, nay, greater than it can be of this. For first, this is a concern only of a particular Nation, and so can expect no foreign attestation; and secondly, it has all along rested on the fidelity of its keepers; which has bin either a single person, or at best some small number at a time; whereas the Scriptures have bin witness'd to by persons of all Nations, and those not single, but collective Bodies and Societies, even as many as there have bin Christian Churches throughout the world. And the same that are its Attestors have bin its Guardians also, & by their multitudes made it a very difficult, if not an impossible thing to falsify it in any considerable degree; it being not imaginable, as I shew'd before from St. *Austin*, all Churches should combine to do it: and if they did not, the fraud could not pass undetected: and if no eminent change could happen, much less could any new, any counterfeit Gospel be obtruded, after innumerable Copies of the first had bintranslated into almost all Languages, and dispersed throughout the world.

Or the Imperial Law.

52. The Imperial Law compil'd by *Justinian*, was soon after his death, by reason of the inroads of the *Goths*, and other barbarous Nations, utterly lost in the Western world; and scarce once heard of for the space of five hundred years, and then came casually to be retriv'd upon the taking of *Amalfis* by the *Pisans*, one single Copy being found there at the plundering of the City. And the whole credit of those Pandects, which have ever since govern'd the Western world, depends in a manner on that single Book, formerly call'd the *Pisan*; and now, after that *Pisa* was taken by the *Florentines*, the *Florentine* Copy. But notwithstanding this, the body of the Civil Law obtains; and no man thinks it reasonable to question its being really what it pretends to be, notwithstanding its single, and so long interrupted derivation. I might draw this parallel thro many other instances, but these may suffice to shew, that if the Scripture might find but so much equity, as to be tried by the common measures of other things, it would very well pass the test.

Men, when they are resolv'd to disobey the precepts of Scripture, think it their concern to disavow its authority.

53. But men seem in this case (like our late Legislators) to set up new extraregular Courts of Justice, to try those whom no ordinary rules will cast, yet their designs require should be condemn'd: and we may conclude, 'tis not the force of reason, but of prejudice, that makes them so unequal to themselves, as to reject the Scripture, when they receive every thing else upon far weaker grounds. The bottom of it is, they are resolv'd not to obey its precepts; and therefore think it the shortest cut to disavow its autority: for should they once own that, they would find themseves intangled in the most inextricable dilemma; that of the *Pharisees* about *John Baptist*; *If we say from heaven, he will say, why then did you not believe him?* Matt. 21. 25. If they confess the Scriptures Divine, they must be self-condemn'd in not obeying them. And truly men that have such preingagements to their lusts, that they must admit nothing that will disturb them, do but prevaricate, when they call for greater evidence and demonstrations: for those bosom Sophisters will elude the most manifest conviction, and like Juglers, make men disbelieve even their own senses. So that any other waies of evidence will be as disputable with them, as those already offer'd: which is the third thing I propos'd to consider.

No possible way of revelation would gain better credit, than those afforded already.

54. It has bin somtimes seen in popular mutinies, that when blanks have bin sent them, they could not agree what to ask: and were it imaginable that God should so far court the infidelity of men, as to allow them to make their own demands, to set down what waies of proof would perswade

perſwade them; I doubt not there are many have obſtinacy enough to defeat their own methods, as well as they do now God's. 'Tis ſure there is no ordinary way of conviction left for them to ask, God having already (as hath alſo bin ſhew'd) afforded that. They muſt therefore reſort to immediat revelation, expect inſtant aſſurances from heaven, that this Book we call the Bible is the Word of God.

55. My firſt queſtion then is, in what manner this revelation muſt be made to appear credible to them. The beſt account we have of the ſeveral waies of revelation is from the *Jews*, to whom God was pleas'd upon new emergences ſignally to revele himſelf. Theſe were firſt dreams; ſecondly, viſions; by both which the Prophets receiv'd their inſpirations. Thirdly, *Urim* and *Thummim*. Fourthly, the *Bath-col* (as they term it) Thunder and voice from heaven. Let us conſider them diſtinctly, and ſee whether our Sceptical men may not probably find ſomwhat to diſpute in every one of theſe. And firſt for dreams, it is among us ſo hard to diſtinguiſh between thoſe that ariſe from conſtitution, prepoſſeſſion of fancy, diabolical, or Divine infuſion, that thoſe that have the moſt critically conſider'd them, do rather difference them by their matter, than any certain diſcriminating circumſtances: and unleſs we had ſome infallible way of diſcerning, our dependance on them may more probably betray than direct us. 'Tis unqueſtionable that uſually fancy has the greateſt ſtroke in them. And if he that ſhould commit himſelf to the guidance of his waking fancy, is not like to be over-wiſely govern'd, what can we expect from his ſleeping? All this and more may doubtleſs be ſoberly enough objected againſt the validity of our common dreams. *Not dreams.*

56. But admit there were now ſuch Divine dreams as brought their evidence along with them, yet ſure 'tis poſſible for prejudic'd men to reſiſt even the cleareſt convictions. For do we not ſee ſome that have made a ſhift to extinguiſh that natural light, thoſe notions which are interwoven into the very frame and conſtitution of their minds, that ſo they may ſin more at eaſe, and without reluctancy? and ſure 'tis as poſſible for them to cloſe their eies againſt all raies from without too, to reſiſt revelation as well as inſtinct; and more likely, by how much a tranſient cauſe is naturally leſs operative than a permanent. An inſtance of this we have in *Balaam*, who being in theſe nightly viſitations prohibited by God to go to *Balak*, and tho he knew then what he afterwards ſaies, *Num.* 23. 19. that *God was not a man that he ſhould lie, nor the ſon of man that he ſhould repent*; yet he would not take God at his firſt word, but upon a freſh bait to his covetouſneſs, tries again for an anſwer more indulgent to his intereſt. Beſides, if God ſhould thus revele himſelf to ſome particular perſons, yet 'tis beyond all preſident or imagination, that he ſhould do it to every man; and then how ſhall thoſe who have theſe dreams, be able to convince others that they are Divine? *Tho clearly ſupernatural.*

57. 'Tis eaſy to gueſs what reception a man that produces no other autority, would have in this ludicrous Age: he would certainly be thought rather to want ſleep, than to have had revelations in it. And if *Jacob* and the Patriarchs, who were themſelves acquainted with Divine dreams, yet did not believe *Joſephs*; any man that ſhould now pretend in that kind, would be ſure to fall under the ſame irony that he did, to be entertain'd with a *behold this dreamer cometh*, Gen. 37. 19. *They would be ſo far from obtaining belief, that probably they would be matter of ſport.*

58. The ſecond way of revelation by viſion was, where the man was wrapt into an extaſy, his ſpirit for a while ſuſpended from all ſenſible communication with the body, and entertain'd with ſupernatural light. In *Not viſions, or extaſies.*

these the Prophets saw emblematical representations of future events, receiv'd knowledg of Divine Mysteries, and commission and ability to discharge the whole Prophetic office. Now suppose God should now raise us Prophets, and inspire them after this manner; what would the merry men of this time say to it? Can we think that they who rally upon all that the former Prophets have writ, would look with much reverence on what the new ones should say? Some perhaps would construe their raptures to be but like *Mahomets* Epilepsy; others a fit of frenzy, others perhaps a being *drunk with new wine*, Acts 2. 13. but those that did the most soberly consider it, would still need a new revelation to attest the truth of this: there being far more convincing arguments to prove the Scriptures Divine, than any man can allege to prove his inspiration to be so. And 'tis sure a very irrational method to attemt the clearing of a doubt by somwhat which is it self more doubtful.

Not Oracles. 59. A third way was by *Urim* and *Thummim*, which Writers tell us was an Oracle resulting from the Letters which were engraven in the High Priest's Pectoral, to which in all important doubts the *Jews* of those Ages resorted, and receiv'd responses; but whether it were by the suddain prominency, or resplendency of the letters, or by any other way, is not material in this place to enquire: one thing is certain, that the Ephod, and consequently the Pectoral was in the Priest's custody, and that he had the administration of the whole affair. Now I refer it to consideration, whether this one circumstance would not (to those prejudic'd men I speak of) utterly evacuate the credit of the Oracle. They have taught themselves to look on Priest-hood, whether Legal or Evangelical, only as a better name for imposture and cosenage: and they that can accuse the Priests for having kept up a cheat for so many Ages, must needs think them such omnipotent Juglers, that nothing can be fence against their Legerdemain: and by consequence, this way of revelation would rather foment their displesure at the Ecclesiastics, than satisfy their doubts of the Scripture.

Not a voice from heaven. 60. Lastly, for the fourth way, that of thunder and voice from heaven, tho that would be a signal way of conviction to unprejudiced men, yet it would probably have as little effect as the rest upon the others: men that pretend to such deep reasoning, would think it childish to be frighted out of their opinion by a clap of thunder; some Philosophical reason shall be found out, to satisfy them that 'tis the effect only of some natural cause, and any the most improbable shall serve turn to supplant the fear of its being a Divine testimony to that which they are so unwilling should be true. As for the voice from Heaven, it must either be heard by others, and related to them; or else immediatly by themselves: if the former, 'twill lie under the same prejudice which the Bible already do's, that they have it but by hear-say: and reporters would fall under the reproch either of design or frenzy; that they meant to deceive, or were themselves deceiv'd by their own distemper'd fancy. But if themselves should be Auditors of it, 'tis odds but their bottomless jealousies in Divine Matters would suggest a possibility of fraud, tho they knew not how to trace it: nay 'tis more than possible that they will rather disbelieve their own senses, than in this instance take their testimony with all its consequences.

Prejudice prevails with men to disbelieve their senses. 68. Nor is this a wild supposition: for we see it possible for not only single men, but multitudes to disbelieve their senses thro an excess of credulity: witness the doctrin of Transubstantiation. Why may it not then be as possible for others to do the like thro a greater excess of incredulity? Besides mens prepossessions and affections have a strange influence on

on their Faith: men many times will not ſuffer themſelves to believe the moſt credible things, if they croſs their inclination. How often do we ſee irregular patients that will not believe any thing that their appetite craves, will do them hurt, tho their Phyſicians, nay their own even ſenſitive experience atteſt it to them? And can we think that a diſeas'd mind, gaſping with an Hydropic thirſt after the pleſures of ſin, will ever aſſent to thoſe premiſes, whoſe concluſion will engage to the renouncing them? Will not a luxurious voluptuous perſon be willing rather to give his ears the lie, to disbelieve what he hears, then permit them more deeply to diſoblige his other ſenſes, by bringing in thoſe reſtraints and mortifications which the Scripture would impoſe upon them?

62. Thus we ſee how little probability there is, that any of theſe waies of revelation would convince theſe incredulous men. And indeed, thoſe that will not believe upon ſuch inducements as may ſatisfy men of ſober reaſon, will hardly ſubmit to any other method, according to that Aſſertion of Father *Abraham*, *If they hear not* Moſes *and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, tho one roſe from the dead*, Luke 16. 31. Now at this rate of infidelity, what way will they leave God to manifeſt any thing convincingly to the world? which is to put him under an impotency greater then adheres to humanity: for we men have power to communicate our minds to others, tell whether we own ſuch or ſuch a thing to which we are intitled; and we can ſatisfy our Auditors that it is indeed we that ſpeak to them: but if every method God uſes, do's rather increaſe then ſatisfy mens doubts, all intercouſe between God and man is intercepted; and he muſt do that of neceſſity, which *Epicurus* fancied he did of his choice; *viz.* keep himſelf unconcern'd in the affairs of mortals, as having no way of communicating with them. Nay (what is yet, if poſſible, more abſurd) he muſt be ſuppos'd to have put the works of his Creation out of his own reach, to have given men diſcourſive faculties, and left himſelf no way of addreſs to them.

Not one riſing from the dead.

63. Theſe inferences how horridly ſoever they ſound, yet I ſee not how they can be diſclaim'd by thoſe, who are unſatisfied with all thoſe waies by which God hath hitherto revel'd himſelf to the world. For can it be imagin'd, that God who created man a reaſonable creature, that himſelf might be glorified in his free and rational obedience; (when all other creatures obey upon impulſe and inſtinct) can it, I ſay, be imagin'd, that he ſhould ſo remiſly purſue his own deſign, as to let ſo many Ages paſs ſince the Creation, and never to acquaint mankind with the particulars wherein that obedience was to be exercis'd. This ſure were ſo diſagreeable to his wiſdom and goodneſs, that it cannot be charg'd upon his will: and conſequently they who own not that he has made any ſuch revelation, muſt tacitly tax him of impotence, that he could not do it. But if any man will ſay he has, and yet reject all this which both Jews and Chriſtians receive as ſuch; let him produce his teſtimonies for the others, or rather (to retort his own meſure) his demonſtrations. And then let it appear whether his Scheme of doctrin, or ours, will need the greater aid of that eaſy credulity he reproches us with.

The Sceptics reaſonings import that God not only has not, but cannot revele his will to man: and has left him in worſe ſtate then brute beaſts, who have inſtinct to guide them.

64. I have now gon thro the method I propoſed for evincing the Divine Original of the Scriptures, and ſhall not deſcend to examin thoſe more minute and particular Cavils which profane men make againſt them; the proof of this virtually ſuperſeding all thoſe. For if it be reaſonable to believe it the Word of God, it muſt be reaſonable alſo to believe it of perfection proportionable to the Author; and then certainly

Exceptions taken againſt the ſtile of holy Scripture.

it must be advanc'd beyond all our objection. For to those who except to the stile, the incoherence, the contradictions, or whatever else in Scripture; I shall only ask this one question, whether it be not much more possible that they (who can pretend to be nothing above fallible men) may misjudg, then that the infallible God should dictate any thing justly liable to those charges: I am sure they must depart as much from Reason as Religion, to affirm the contrary. But alas, instead of this implicit submission to Gods Word, men take up explicit prejudices against it; condemn it without ever examining the truth of the allegation. 'Tis certain, that in a writing of such Antiquity, whose original Language has Idioms and Phrases so peculiar, whose Country had Customs so differing from the rest of the world; 'tis impossible to judg of it without reference to all those circumstances. Add to this, that the Hebrew has bin a dead Language for well nigh two thousand years, no where in common use: nor is there any other ancient Book now extant in it, besides those (yet not all neither,) of the Old Testament.

Concerning which the censurers are generally most incompetent.

65. Now of those many who defame Holy Writ, how few are there that have the industry to enquire into those particulars? And when for want of knowledg, som passages seem improper, or perhaps contradictory; the Scripture must bear the blame of their ignorance, and be accus'd as absurd and unintelligible, because themselves are stupid and negligent. It were therefore methinks but a reasonable proposal, that no man should arraign it, till they have used all honest diligence, taken in all probable helps for the understanding it: and if this might be obtain'd, I believe most of its Accusers would like those of the woman in the Gospel *John* 8.9. drop away, as conscious of their own incompetency: the loudest out-cries that are made against it, being commonly of those who fall upon it only as a fashionable theme of discourse, and hope to acquire themselves the reputation of wits by thus charging God foolishly. But he that would candidly and uprightly endeavor to comprehend before he judges, and to that end industriously use those means which the providence of God by the labors of pious men hath afforded him, will certainly find cause to acquit the Scripture of those imputations which our bold Critics have cast upon it. I do not say that he shall have all the obscurities of it perfectly clear'd to him; but he shall have so many of them as is for his real advantage, and shall discern such reasons why the rest remain unfathomable, as may make him not only justify, but celebrate the wisdom of the Author.

But no writing can escape cavil and prejudice: and 'tis a judgement that they should not understand who shut their eies.

66. Yet this is to be expected only upon the fore-mention'd condition, *viz.* that he come with sincere and honest intentions; for as for him that comes to the Scripture with design, and wishes to find matter of cavil and accusations; there is little doubt but that spirit of impiety and profaness which sent him thither, will meet him there as a spirit of delusion, and occecation. That Prince of the Air will cast such mists, raise such black vapors; that as the Apostle speaks, *the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shall not shine unto him*, 2 Cor. 4. 5. Indeed were such a man left only to the natural efficacy of prejudice, that is of it self so blinding, so infatuating a thing, as commonly fortifies against all conviction. We see it in all the common instances of life; mens very senses are often enslav'd by it: the prepossession of a strong fancy will make the objects of sight or hearing appear quite different from what they are. But in the present case, when this shall be added to Satanical illusions, and both left to their operations by Gods withdrawing his illuminating grace, the case of such a man answers that description of Scripture, *They have eies and see not, ears have*

they

they and hear not, Rom. 11. 8. And that God will ſo withdraw his grace, we have all reaſon to believe; he having promis'd it only to the meek, to thoſe who come with malleable ductile ſpirits, to learn, not to deride or cavil. Saint *Peter* tells us, that the *unlearned and unſtable wreſt the Scripture to their own deſtruction*, 2 Petr. 3. 15. And if God permit ſuch to do ſo, much more will he the proud and malicious.

He that do's the will of God, ſhall know of the doctrine.

67. I ſay not this, to deter any from the ſtudy of Holy Scripture, but only to caution them to bring a due preparation of mind along with them; Gods Word being like a generous ſoveraign medicament, which if ſimply and regularly taken, is of the greateſt benefit; but if mixt with poiſon, ſerves only to make that more fatally operative. To conclude, he that would have his doubts ſolv'd concerning Scripture, let him follow the method our bleſſed Lord has preſcrib'd: Let him *do the will of God, and then he ſhall know of the doctrin, whether it be of God*, John 7. 17. Let him bring with him a probity of mind, a willingneſs to aſſent to all convictions he ſhall there meet with; and then he will find grounds ſufficient to aſſure him that it is Gods Word, and conſequently to be receiv'd with all the ſubmiſſion and reverence, that its being ſo exacts.

SECT. III.

The ſubject matter treated of in the Holy Scripture, is excellent, as is alſo its end and deſign.

The ſubject matter of Scripture conſidered.

1. WE have hitherto conſider'd the holy Scripture only under one notion, as it is the Word of God; we come now to view it in the ſubject matter of it, the ſeveral parts whereof it conſiſts; which are ſo various and comprehenſive, as ſhews the whole is deriv'd from *him who is all in all* 1 Cor. 19. 28. But that we may not ſpeak only looſely, and at rovers, we will take this excellent frame in pieces, and conſider its moſt eminent parts diſtinctly. Now the parts of Holy Writ ſeem to branch themſelves into theſe ſeverals: Firſt, the Hiſtorical; ſecondly, the Prophetic; thirdly, the Doctrinal; fourthly, the Preceptive; fifthly, the Minatory; ſixthly, the Promiſſory. Theſe are the ſeveral veins in this rich Mine, in which he who induſtriouſly labors, will find the Pſalmiſt was not out in his eſtimate, when he pronounces them *more to be deſir'd then gold, yea, then fine gold*, Pſal. 19. 10.

Firſt the hiſtorical part.

2. To ſpeak firſt of the Hiſtorical part: The things which chiefly recommend a Hiſtory, are the dignity of the ſubject, the truth of the relation, and thoſe pleaſant or profitable obſervations which are interwoven with it. And firſt, for the dignity of the ſubject, the Hiſtory of the Bible muſt be acknowledged to excell all others: thoſe ſhew the riſe and progreſs of ſom one people or Empire; this ſhews us the original of the whole Univerſe; and particularly of man, for whoſe uſe and benefit the whole Creation was deſign'd. By this mankind is brought into acquaintance with it ſelf; made to know the elements of its conſtitution, and taught to put a differing value upon that Spirit which was *breath'd into it by God*, Gen. 2. 7. and the fleſh whoſe *foundation is in the duſt*, Job 4. 19. And when this Hiſtorical part of Scripture contracts and draws into a narrow channel, when it records the concerns but of one Nation, yet it was that which God had dignified above all the reſt of the world, markt it out for his own

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peculiar; made it the repository of his truth, and the visible stock from whence the Messias should come, in whom *all the Nations of the earth were to be blessed*, Gen. 18. 18. so that in this one people of the Jews, was virtually infolded the highest and most important interests of the whole world; and it must be acknowledg'd, no Story could have a nobler subject to treat of.

The relations are remarkably impartial, the historians recording their own faults.

3. Secondly, as to the truth of the relation, tho to those who own it Gods Word there needs no other proof; yet it wants not human Arguments to confirm it. The most undoubted symptom of sincerity in an Historian is impartiality. Now this is very eminent in Scripture writers: they do not record others faults, and baulk their own; but indifferently accuse themselves as well as others. *Moses* mentions his own diffidence and unwillingness to go on Gods message, *Exod.* 4. 13. his provocation of God at the waters of *Meribah*, Num. 20. *Jonah* records his own sullen behavior towards God, with as great aggravations as any of his enemies could have don. *Peter* in his dictating Saint *Marks* Gospel, neither omits nor extenuates his sin; all he seems to speak short in, is his repentance. Saint *Paul* registers himself as the greatest of sinners.

And their neerest relations.

4. And as they were not indulgent to their own personal faults, so neither did any nearness of relation, any respect of quality bribe them to a concelement: *Moses* relates the offence of his sister *Miriam* in mutining. *Num.* 12. 1. of his brother *Aaron* in the matter of the Calf, *Exod.* 32. 4. with as little disguise as that of *Korah* and his company. *David*, tho a King, hath his adultery and murder displaied in the blackest characters: and King *Hezekiahs* little vanity of shewing his tresures, do's not escape a remark. Nay, even the reputation of their Nation could not biass the sacred Writers; but they freely tax their crimes: the Israelites murmurings in the wilderness, their Idolatries in *Canaan*, are set down without any palliation or excuse. And they are as frequently branded for their stubbornes and ingratitude, as the Canaanites are for their abominations. So that certainly no History in the world do's better attest its truth by this evidence of impartiality.

The narrations are rare and surprizing.

5. In the last place it commends it self both by the plesure and profit it yields. The rarity of those events it records, surprizes the mind with a delightful admiration; and that mixture of sage Discourses, and well-coucht Parables wherewith it abounds, do's at once please and instruct. How ingenuosly apt was *Nathans* Apologue to *David*, whereby with holy artifice he ensnar'd him into repentance? And it remains still matter of instruction to us, to shew us with what unequal scales we are apt to weigh the same crime in others and our selves. So also that long train of smart calamities which succeeded his sin, is set out with such particularity, that it seems to be exactly the crime reverst. His own lust with *Bathsheba*, was answer'd with *Amnons* towards *Thamar*; his murder of *Uriah* with that of *Amnon*; his trecherous contrivance of that murder, with *Absoloms* traiterous conspiracy against him. So that every circumstance of his punishment, was the very echo and reverberation of his guilt. A multitude of the like instances might be produc'd out of holy Writ; all concurring to admonish us, that God exactly marks, and will repay our crimes; and that commonly with such propriety, that we need no other clue to guide us to the cause of our sufferings, then the very sufferings themselves. Indeed innumerable are the profitable observations arising from the historical part of Scripture, that flow so easily and unconstrain'd, that nothing but a stupid inadvertence in the reader can make him baulk them: therefore 'twould be impertinent here to multiply instances.

6. Let

6. Let us next consider the prophetic part of Scripture, and we shall find it no less excellent in its kind. The prophetic Books are for the most part made up (as the prophetic Office was) of two parts; prediction and instruction. When God rais'd up Prophets, 'twas not only to acquaint men with future events, but to reform their present manners: therefore as they are called Seers in one respect, so they are Watch-men and Shepherds in another. Nay, indeed the former was often subservient to the other as to the nobler end; their gift of fore-telling was to gain them autority, to be as it were the seal of their commission; to convince men that they were sent from God: and so to render them the more pliant to their reproofs and admonitions. And the very matter of their prophecies was usually adapted to this end: the denouncing of judgments being the most frequent Theme, and that design'd to bring men to repentance; as appears experimentally in the case of *Nineveh*. And in this latter part of their office, the Prophets acted with the greatest incitation and vehemence. *Secondly the Prophetic part.*

7. With what liberty and zeal do's *Elijah* arraign *Ahab* of *Naboths* murder, and foretel the fatal event of it, without any fear of his power, or reverence of his greatness? And *Samuel*, when he delivers *Saul* the fatal message of his rejection, do's passionately and convincingly expostulate with him concerning his sin, 1 *Sam.* 15. 17. Now the very same Spirit still breaths in all the prophetic Writings: the same truth of prediction, and the same zeal against vice. *The liberty and freedom of rebukes.*

8. First for the predictions, what signal completions do we find? How exactly are all the denunciations of judgments fulfill'd, where repentance has not interven'd? He that reads the 28. chap. of *Deut.* and compares it with the Jews calamities, both under the Assyrians and Babylonians, and especially under the Romans, would think their oppressors had consulted it, and transcrib'd their severities thence. And even these Nations, who were the instruments of accomplishing those dismal presages, had their own ruins foretold, and as punctually executed. And as in Kingdoms and Nations, so to private persons none of the prophetic threatnings ever return'd emty. The sentence pronounc'd against *Ahab*, *Jezebel*, and their posterity, was fulfill'd even to the most minute circumstances of place and manner; as is evident by comparing the denunciation of *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 21. 19. 23. with their tragical ends recorded in the following chapters. And as for *Jehu*, whose service God was pleased to use in that execution, tho he rewarded it with entailing the crown of *Israel* on him for four descents; yet he fore-told those should be the limits, and accordingly we find *Zachariah*, the fourth descendent of his line, was the last of it that sate on that throne, 2 *Kings* 15. 10. So also the destruction of *Achitophel* and *Judas*, the one immediat, the other many hundred years remote, are fore-told by *David*, Psal. 109. and we find exactly answer'd in the event. *The truth of predictions.*

9. Nor was this exactness confin'd only to the severe predictions, but as eminent in the more gracious. All the blessings which God by himself, or the Ministry of his Prophets promis'd, were still infallibly made good. At the time of life God return'd and visited *Sarah* with conception, notwithstanding those natural improbabilities which made her not only distrust, but even deride and laugh at the promise, *Gen.* 18. The posterity of that Son of Promise, the whole race of *Abraham* was deliver'd from the Egyptian bondage, and possest of *Canaan*, at the precise time which God had long before signified to *Abraham*, Gen. 15. So likewise the return of *Especially the promisory.*

the Jews from the Babiloniſh captivity, was fore-told many years before their deportation, and *Cyrus* named for their reſtorer, before he had either name or being ſave only in Gods preſcience, *Iſ.* 44. 28. But I need not multiply inſtances of national or perſonal promiſes. The earlieſt and most comprehenſive promiſe of all was that of the Meſſiah, in whom all perſons and *Nations of the world were to be bleſt*, Gen. 22. 11. *that ſeed of the woman that ſhould bruiſe the Serpents head*, Gen. 3. 15. *To him give all the Prophets witneſs*, as Saint *Peter* obſerves, *Acts* 10. And he who was the ſubject, made himſelf alſo the expounder of thoſe prophecies in his walk to *Emmaus* with the two Diſciples, *Luke* 24. 27. *beginning at* Moſes *and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himſelf.*

And above all the promiſe of the Meſſiah.

10. This as it was infinitly the greateſt bleſſing afforded mankind, ſo was it the moſt frequently and eminently predicted; and that with the moſt exact particularity as to all circumſtances. His immaculate conception, the union of his two natures implied in his name *Immanuel*; *Behold a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel*; is moſt plainly fore-told by *Iſa.* chap. 7. 14. Nay, the very place of his birth ſo punctually fore-told, that the Prieſts and Scribes could readily reſolve *Herods* queſtion upon the ſtrength of the Prophecy, and aſſure him Chriſt muſt be *born in Bethlehem*, Matt. 2. 5. As for the whole buſineſs and deſign of his life, we find it ſo deſcrib'd by *Iſaiah*, chap. 61. as Chriſt himſelf owns it, Luke 4. 18. *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath appointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

And propitiation by his death.

11. If we look farther to his death, the greateſt part of the Old Teſtament has a direct aſpect on it. All the Levitical œconomy of Sacrifices and Ablutions were but prophetic Rites, and ocular Predictions of that one expiatory Oblation. Nay, moſt of God's providential diſpenſations to the Jews, carried in them types and prefigurations of this. Their reſcue from *Egypt*, the ſprinkling of blood to ſecure them from the deſtroying Angel; the Manna with which they were fed; the Rock which ſupplied them water: theſe and many more referr'd to Chriſt, as their final and higheſt ſignification.

Prefigur'd in ſacrifices, and fore-told by all the Prophets.

12. But beſides theſe darker adumbrations, we have (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *a more ſure word of prophecy.* Saint *Peter* in his calculation begins with *Moſes*, takes in *Samuel*, and the whole ſucceſſion of Prophets after him, as bearing witneſs to this great event of Chriſts paſſion, *Acts* 4. 22. 24. And indeed he that reads the Prophets conſideringly, ſhall find it ſo punctually deſcrib'd, that the Evangeliſts do not much more fully inſtruct him in the circumſtances of it. *Daniel* tells us his death, as to the kind of it, was to be violent: *The Meſſiah ſhall be cut off*; and as to the deſign of it, 'twas *not for himſelf*, Dan. 9. 26. But the Prophet *Iſaiah* gives us more then a bare negative account of it; and expreſly ſaies, *he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was on him, and by his ſtripes we were healed*, cap. 53. 3. And again, ver. 10. *Thou ſhalt make his Soul an offering for ſin*; and verſe 11. *my righteous Servant ſhall juſtify many, for he ſhall bear their iniquities.* Nor is, *Job* an Idumean, much ſhort of even this Evangelical Prophet, in that ſhort Creed of his, wherein he owns him as his Redeemer, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.* Job 19. 25.

13. And

13. And as the end, ſo the circumſtances of his ſufferings are moſt of them under prediction: His extention upon the Croſs is mention'd by the Pſalmiſt: *They pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones*, Pſal. 22. 16, 17. As for his inward dolors, they are in that Pſalm ſo pathetically deſcribed, that Chriſt choſe that very form to breath them out in: *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* v. 1. So his revilers did alſo tranſcribe part of their reproaches from verſe 9. *He truſted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him*, Matt. 27. 43. That vinegar which was offered him on the croſs, was a completion of a prophecy; *In my thirſt they gave me vinegar to drink*, Pſ. 69. 21. the piercing of his ſide was expreſly fore-told by *Zachary*; *they ſhall look on him whom they have pierced*, Zach. 10. 12. The company in which he ſuffer'd and the interment he had, are alſo intimated by *Iſaiah*, *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*, Iſ. 53. 9. Nay even the diſpoſal of his garments was not without a prophecy: *they parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots*, Pſ. 22. 18. Here are a cloud of witneſſes which as they ſerve eminently to atteſt the truth of Chriſtian Religion; ſo do they to evince the excellency of ſacred Scripture, as to the verity of the Prophetic part. *The ſmalleſt circumſtances of the paſſion were not omitted.*

14. As to the admonitory part of the prophetic Writings, they are in their kind no way inferior to the other. The reproofs are autoritative and convincing. What piercing exprobrations do we find of *Iſraels* ingratitude? How often are they upbraided with the better examples of the bruit creatures? with the Ox and the Aſs by *Iſaiah*, ch. 1. 3. with the Stork, and the Crane, and the Swallow, by *Jeremiah*, ch. 8. 7. Nay the conſtancy of the Heathen to their falſe gods is inſtanc'd to reproch their revolt from the true. *Hath a Nation changed their gods which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit*, Jer. 2. 11. What awful, what majeſtic repreſentations do we find of Gods power, to awake their dread! *Fear ye not me, ſaith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my preſence; who have placed the ſands for the bounds of the ſea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot paſs over; and tho the waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail; tho they roar, yet can they not paſs over it*, Jer. 22. And again, *Thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place*, Iſ. 57. 15. So we find him deſcrib'd as *a God glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders*, Ex. 15. 11. Theſe and many other the like heights of Divine eloquence we meet with in the prophetic Writings: which cannot but ſtrike us with an awful reverence of the Divine Power. *The prophetic writings are moſt remarkable in their admonitory part.*

15. Nor are they leſs pathetic in the gentler ſtrains. What inſtance is there of the greateſt tenderneſs and love, which God has not adopted to expreſs his by? He perſonates all the neareſt and moſt endearing relations: that of a Husband; *I will marry thee to my ſelf*, Hoſ. 2. 19. of a Father; *I am a Father to* Iſrael, *and* Ephraim *is my firſt born:* nay, he vies bowels with the tender ſex, and makes it more poſſible for a mother to renounce her *compaſſions towards the ſon of her womb*, then for him to with-draw his, *Iſa.* 49. 15. By all theſe endearments, theſe *cords of a man, theſe bands of love*, as himſelf ſtiles them, *Hoſ.* 11. 4. endeavoring to draw his people to their duty and their happineſs. And when their perverſeneſs fruſtrates all this his holy Artifice, how paſſionately do's he expoſtulate with them? How ſolemnly proteſt his averſneſs to their ruin? *Why will ye die, O houſe of* Iſrael? *for I have no pleſure in the death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God*, Ezek. 18. 31, 32. with what regrets and relenting do's he think of abandoning them? *How ſhall I give thee up* Ephraim? *How* *And the pathetic inducements to repentance.*

shall I deliver thee Israel ? *How shall I make thee as* Admah ! *How shall I set thee as* Zeboim ? *My heart is turn'd within me, my repentings are kindled together*, Hos. 11. 8. In short, 'twere endless to cite the places in these prophetic Books, wherein God do's thus condescend to solicit even the sensitive part of man; and that with such moving Rhetoric, that I cannot but wonder at the exception som of our late Critics make against the Bible, for its defect in that particular: for Oratory is nothing but a dextrous application to the affections and passions of men. And certainly we find not that don with greater advantage any where then in sacred Writ.

Which yet is backt with reason, and uncontrolable argument.

16. Yet it was not the design of the Prophets (no more then of the Apostle) to take men with guile, 2 *Cor.* 12. 16. to inveigle their affections unawares to their understandings; but they address as well to their reasons, make solemn appeals tn their judicative faculties. And *now judg I pray between me and my vineyard*, saies *Isa.* 5. 3. Nay, God by the Prophet *Ezechiel* solemnly pleads his own cause before them, vindicates the equity of his proceedings from the aspersions they had cast on them; and by most irrefragable Arguments refutes that injurious proverb which went currant among them; and in the close appeals to themselves, *O house of* Israel *are not my waies equal? are not your waies unequal?* Ez. 18. The evidences were so clear that he remits the matter to their own determination. And generally we shall find among all the Topics of disswasion from sin, there is none more closely prest, then that of the folly of it. Idolatry was a sin to which *Israel* had a great propension, and against which most of the Prophets admonitions were directed. And certainly it can never be more expos'd, and the sottish unreasonableness of it better displaied, then we find it in the 44. chap. of *Isaiah*. In like manner we may read the Prophet *Jeremy* disswading from the same sin by Arguments of the most irrefragable conviction, *Ier.* 10.

Their concern was for solid vertue, and true piety.

17. And as the Prophets omitted nothing as to the manner of their address, to render their exhortations effectual, the matter of them was likewise so considerable as to command attention; It was commonly either the recalling them from their revolts and Apostacies from God by Idolatry, or else to convince them of the insignificancy of all those legal ceremonial performances they so much confided in, when taken up as a *supersedeas* to moral duties. Upon this account it is, that they often depreciate, and in a manner prohibit the solemnest of their worships. *To what purpose are the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination to me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity even your solemn meetings, &c.* Isa. 1. 11. 13. Not that these things were in themselves reprovable; for they were all commanded by God; but because the Jews depended so much on these external observances, that they thought by them to commute for the *weightier matters of the Law* (as our Savior after stiles them) *judgment, mercy and faith*, Matt. 23. 23. lookt on these rites which discriminated them from other Nations, as dispensations from the universal obligations of nature aud common justice.

Not satisfied with little formalities and outward services.

18. This deceit of theirs is sharply upbraided to them by the Prophet *Jeremy*; where he calls their boasts of the *Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, *lying words*, and on the contrary, laies the whole stress of their obedience, and expectation of their happiness on the justice and innocence of ther conversation, chap. 7. 4. And after do's smartly reproch their insolence in boldly resorting to that house, which by bringing their sins along

along with them, they made but an Asylum and Sanctuary for those crimes. *Will ye steal, murder and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to* Baal, *and walk after other gods whom ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house? Is this house which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eies?* Jer. 7. 9, 10, 11. Indeed all the Prophets seem to conspire in this one design, of making them look thro shadows and ceremonies, to that inward Purity, Justice and Honesty, which they were design'd to inculcate, not to supplant. And this design as it is in it self most excellent, most worthy the command of God and the nature of man; so we have seen that it has bin pursued by all the most apt and most powerful mediums, that the thing or persons addrest to were capable of; and so that the Prophets are no less eminent for the discharge of this exhortatory part of their office, then they were in the former, of the predicting.

19. The next part of Scripture we are to consider, is the Doctrinal; by which I shall not in this place understand the whole complex of Faith and manners together; but restrain it only to those Revelations which are the object of our Belief: and these are so sublime, as shews flesh and blood never revel'd them. Those great mysteries of our Faith, the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Hypostatical union, the Redemtion of the world by making the offended party the sacrifice for the offence; are things of so high and abstruse speculation, as no finite understanding can fully fathom. I know their being so, is by some made an Argument for disbelief; but doubtless, very unjustly: for (not to insist upon the different natures of Faith and Science, by which that becomes a proper object of the one which is not of the other) our non-comprehension is rather an indication that they have a higher rise; and renders it infinitly improbable that they could spring from mans invention. For 'twere to suppose too great a disproportion between human faculties to think men could invent what themselves could not understand. Indeed these things lie so much out of the road of human imagination, that I dare appeal to the brests of the most perverse gain-saiers, whether ever they could have fallen into their thoughts without suggestion from without. And therefore 'tis a miraculous contradiction to reject these truths because of their dissonancy from human reason, and yet at the same time to ascribe their original to man. But certainly there can be nothing more inconsistent with mere natural reason, then to think God can be or do no more then man can comprehend. Never any Nation or person that own'd a Deity, did ever attemt so to circumscribe him: and it is proportionable only to the licentious profaness of these latter daies, thus to mesure immensity and omnipotence by our narrow scantling. *Thirdly, the doctrinal part.*

20. The more genuine and proper effect of these supernatural truths is, to raise our admiration of that divine Wisdom, *whose wayes are so past finding out*; and to give us a just sense of that infinit distance which is between it, and the highest of that reason wherein we so pride our selves. And the great propriety these doctrins have to that end, may well be reckon'd as one part of their excellency. *Which acquaints us with the majesty of God.*

21. Indeed there is no part of our holy Faith, but is naturally productive of som peculiar vertue; as the whole Scheme together engages us to be universally *holy in all manner of conversation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. And it is the supereminent advantage true Religion hath over all false ones, that it tends to so laudable an end. *And obliges to vertue.*

The heathen theology ministred to vice

22. The Theology of the Heathens was in many instances an extract and quintessence of vice. Their most solemn Rites, and sacredest Mysteries were of such a nature, that instead of refining and elevating, they corrupted and debased their Votaries; immerst them in all those abominable pollutions which sober nature abhorr'd. Whereas the principles of our Faith serve to spiritualize and rectify us, to raise us as much above mere manhood as theirs cast them below it.

We are greatly advantag'd by having just notions of God.

23. And as they are of this vast advantage to us, so also are they just to God, in giving us right notions of him. What vile unworthy apprehensions had the Heathen of their Deities; intitling them not only to the passions but even to the crimes of men: making *Jupiter* an adulterer, *Mercury* a thief, *Bacchus* a drunkard, *&c.* proportionably of the rest? Whereas our God is represented to us as an essence, so spiritual and incorporeal, that we must be unbodied our selves before we can perfectly conceive what he is: so far from the impotent affections and inclinations of men, that he has neither parts, nor passions; and is fain to veil himself under that disguise, to speak somtimes as if he had, merely in condescension to our grosser faculties. And again, so far from being an example, a patron of vice, that his *eies are too pure to behold iniquity*, Hab. 1. 13. Holiness is an essential part of his nature, and he must deny himself to put it off.

His lowest condescension in taking our humane nature.

24. The greatest descent that ever he made to humanity, was in the incarnation of the second Person: yet even in that, tho he was linked with a sinful nature, yet he preserved the person immaculate; and while he had all the sins of the world upon him by imputation, suffer'd not any one to be inherent in him.

As also his other adorable attributes.

25. To conclude, the Scripture describes our God to us by all those glorious Attributes of infinity, Power and Justice, which may render him the proper object of our Adorations and Reverence: and it discribes him also in those gentler Attributes of Goodness, Mercy and Truth, which may excite our love of, and dependence on him. These are representations somthing worthy of God, and such as impress upon our mind great thoughts of him.

Above all the mystery of redemtion.

26. But never did the divine Attributes so concur to exert themselves, as in the mystery of our Redemtion: where his Justice was satisfied without diminution to his Mercy; and his Mercy without entrenching on his Justice: his Holiness most eminent in his indignation against sin, and yet his Love no less so in sparing sinners: these contradictions being reconcil'd, this discord compos'd into harmony by his infinit Wisdom. This is that stupendous Mystery into which *the Angels desir'd to look*, 1 Pet. 1. 12. And this is it which by *the Gospel is preach'd unto us*; as it follows, ver. 25.

The Scripture to the knowledge of God adds that of our selves.

27. And as the Scripture gives us this knowledg of God, so it do's also of our selves; in which two, all profitable knowledg is comprised. It teaches us how vile we were in our original dust; and how much viler yet in our fall, which would have sunk us below our first principles, sent us not only to earth, but hell. It shews the impotence of our lapsed estate; that we are not *able of our selves so much as to think a good thought*: and it shews us also the dignity of our renovated estate, that we *are heirs of God, and fellow-heirs with Christ*, Rom. 8. 17. yet lest this might puff us up with mistaken hopes; it plainly acquaints us with the condition on which this depends; that it must be our obedience both active and passive, which is to intitle us to it: that we must *be faithfull*

to

to death, if we mean to inherit a crown of life, Rev. 2. 10. and that *we muſt ſuffer with Chriſt, if we will be glorified with him*, Rom. 8. 17. And upon ſuppoſition that we perform our parts of the condition, it gives us the moſt certain aſſurance, engages Gods veracity that he will not fail on his. By this it gives us ſupport againſt all the adverſities of life; aſſuring us *the ſufferings of it are not worthy to be compared with the glory we expect*, Rom. 8. 18. yea, and againſt the terrors of death too; by aſſuring us that what we look on as a diſſolution, is but a temporary parting; and we only put off our bodies, that they may put off corruption, and be cloth-ed with immortality.

28. Theſe and the like are the doctrines the holy Scripture offers to us: and we may certainly ſay, they are *faithful ſayings*, and *worthy of all acceptation*, 1 Tim. 4. 15. The notions it gives us of God are ſo ſublime and great, that they cannot but affect us with reverence and admiration: and yet withall, ſo amiable and endearing that they cannot but raiſe love and gratitude, affiance and delight.

The doctrines of the Scripture as they are faithful ſayings, ſo alſo worthy of all acceptation.

29. And, which is yet more, theſe milder Attributes are apt to inſpirit us with a generous ambition of aſſimilation; excite us to tranſcribe all his imitable excellencies: in which the very Heathens could diſcern conſiſted the accompliſhment of human felicity.

And are apt to inſpirit with a generous ambition of aſſimliation.

30. And then the knowledg it gives us of our ſelves, do's us the kindeſt office imaginable: keeps us from thoſe ſwelling thoughts we are too apt to entertain, and ſhews us the neceſſity of bottoming our hopes upon a firmer foundation: and then again keeps us from being lazy or ſecure, by ſhewing us the neceſſity of our own endevors. In a word, it teaches us to be humble and induſtrious, and whoever is ſo ballaſted can hardly be ſhipwrackt.

The knowledg of our ſelves obliges to humility.

31. Theſe are the excellencies of the doctrinal part of Scripture, which alſo renders them moſt aptly preparative for the preceptive. And indeed, ſo they were deſign'd: the *Credenda* and the *Agenda* being ſuch inſeparable relations, that whoever parts them, forfeits the advantage of both. The moſt ſolemn profeſſion of Chriſt, the moſt importunate invocations, Lord, Lord, will ſignify nothing to them *which do not the things which he ſaies*, Matt. 7. And how excellent, how rational thoſe precepts are which the Scripture propoſes to us from him, is our next point of conſideration.

The credenda *and* agenda *are inſeparably linkt together.*

32. The firſt Law which God gave to mankind was that of nature. And tho the impreſſions of it upon the mind be by *Adams* fall exceedingly dimm'd and defac'd; yet that derogates nothing from the dignity and worth of that Law, which God has been ſo far from cancelling, that he ſeems to have made it the rule and ſquare of his ſubſequent Laws: ſo that nothing is injoin'd in thoſe, but what is conſonant and agreeable to that. The Moral Law given in the Decalogue to the Jews, the Evangelical Law given in the Goſpel to Chriſtians, have this natural Law for their baſis and foundation. They licence nothing which that prohibits, and very rarely prohibit any thing which it licences.

The Chriſtian law deſigns the reſtoring that of nature

33. 'Tis true, Chriſt in his Sermon on the Mount, raiſes Chriſtians to a greater ſtrictneſs then the Jews thought themſelves oblig'd to; but that was not by contradicting either the natural or moral Law, but by reſcuing the latter from thoſe corruptions which the falſe gloſſes of the Scribes and Phariſees had mixt with it; and reducing it to its primitive integrity, and extent. In a word, as the Decalogue was given to repair the defacings, and renew the impreſſions of the natural Law; ſo the

And neither contradicts the natural or Jewiſh law, but reſcues the latter from the gloſſes of Scribes and Phariſees.

the precepts of the Gospel were design'd to revive and illustrate both. And accordingly we find Christ, in the matter of divorce, calls them back to this natural Law; *In the beginning it was not so*, Mat. 19. 8. I say not but that even these natural notions are in som instances refin'd and elevated by Christ; the second *Adam* being to repair the fall of the first with advantage: but yet he still builds upon that ground-work, introduces nothing that is inconsistent with it.

The accordance of those laws, is a great recommendation of the scripture precepts.

34. And this accordance between these several Laws is a circumstance that highly recommends Scripture precepts to us. We cannot imagin but that God who made man for no other end but to be an instrument of his glory, and a recipient of all communicable parts of his happiness, would assign him such rules and mesures as were most conducive to those ends. And therefore since the Scripture injunctions are of the same mould, we must conclude them to be such as tend to the perfection of our being; the making us what God originally intended us: and he that would not be that, will certainly chuse much worse for himself.

The commands of our Savior are unjustly taxed as unreasonable.

35. I know there have bin prejudices taken up against the precepts of Christ, as if they impos'd unreasonable, unsupportable strictnesses upon men: and some have assum'd liberty to argue mutinously against them; nay, against God too for putting such natural appetites into men, and then forbidding them to satisfy them.

His restraints are suitable to human nature in innocency.

36. But the ground of this cavil is the not rightly distinguishing of natural appetites, which are to be differenc'd according to the two states of rectitude and depravation: those of the first rank are the appetites God put into man; and those were all regular and innocent, such as tended to the preservation of his being: nature in its first integrity mesuring its desires by its needs. Now Christs prohibitions are not directed against these, he forbids no one kind of these desires. And tho the precept of self-denial may somtimes restrain us in some particular acts; yet that is but proportionable to that restraint *Adam* was under in relation to the forbidden tree, a particular instance of his obedience; and fence of his safety. So that if men would consider nature under that its first and best notion, they cannot accuse Christ of being severe to it.

But the appetites of corrupted nature are indeed restrain'd.

37. But 'tis manifest they take it in another acception, and mean that corruption of nature which inordinatly inclines to sensitive things; and on this account they call their riots, their luxuries, appetites put into them by God: whereas 'tis manifest this was superinduced from another coast: the wise man gives us its true pedigree in what he saies of death, which is its twin-sister: *By the envy of the devil came death into the world*, Wis. 2. 24. And can they expect that Christ who came to *destroy the works of the devil*, 1 Joh. 3. 8. should frame Laws in their favor, make acts of toleration and indulgence for them? This were to annul the whole design of his coming into the world, which was to restore us from our lapst estate, and elevate us to those higher degrees of purity which he came not only to prescribe, but to exemplify to us.

The most exorbitant pursuits of vice, we call nature.

38. But in this affair men often take nature in a yet wider and worse notion; and under natural desires comprehend whatever upon any sort of motive they have a mind to do. The awe of a superior, the importunity of a companion, custom, and example, make men do many ill things, to which their nature would never promt them; nay, many times such as their nature reluctes to, and abhors, 'tis certainly thus in all debauchery and excess. 'Tis evident, it gratifies no mans nature to be drunk, or to lie under undigested loads of meats: these are out-rages and violences upon nature,

take

take it only in the moſt ſenſitive notion, ſuch as ſhe ſtruggles to avert: and yet men make her bear, not only the oppreſſion, but the blame too.

39. But beſides 'tis to be conſider'd, that the nature of a man includes reaſon as well as ſenſe, and to this all ſorts of luxury are yet more repugnant, as that which clouds the mind, and degrades the man (who in his conſtitution is a rational being) and ſets him in the rank of mere animals: and certainly theſe can be no appetites of nature, which thus ſubvert it. *Truly ſpeaking, the nature of man includes reaſon as well as ſenſe.*

40. The like may be ſaid concerning revenge, particularly that abſurdeſt ſort of it, duels; which certainly are as great contradictions to nature as can be imagin'd, the unravelling and cancelling its very firſt principle of ſelf-preſervation, (which in other inſtances men bring in bar againſt duty.) And yet men will ſay the generoſity of their natures compels them to it; ſo making their natures a kind of *felo de ſe* to promt the deſtroying it ſelf: when alas 'tis only the falſe notion they have got of honor that ſo ingages them. And if men would but ſoberly conſider, they muſt be convinc'd that there is nothing more agreeable to reaſon then that precept of Chriſt of not retaliating injuries; which is in effect but to chuſe a ſingle inconvenience before a long train of miſchiefs. And certainly if nature even in its deprav'd eſtate were left to determine, it would reſolve it a better bargain to go off with a reprochful word, then to loſe a limb, perhaps a life in the revenge of it. There being no maxim more indiſputable, then that of evils the leaſt is to be choſen. And the innate principle of ſelf-love doe's more ſtrongly biaſs nature to preſerve it ſelf, then any external thing can to deſtroy it. *Revenge is no true foundation.*

41. I know 'twill be ſaid to this, that revenge is a natural appetite: but I ſay ſtill, ſelf-preſervation is more ſo; and would prevail againſt as much of revenge as is natural, were it not heightned and fortified by fancy, and that Chimera of point of honor, which, as it is now ſtated, is certainly one of the moſt emty nothings that ever was brought in balance with ſolid intereſts. And indeed 'tis to belie nature, and ſuppoſe it to have forfeited all degrees of reaſon, as well as vertue, to faſten ſo abſurd a choice upon her. But admit revenge to be never ſo much the dictate of corrupt nature. Revenge is but a relative to injury: and he that will ſay God put the appetite of revenge into man, muſt ſay he put the appetite of injury into him alſo: which is ſuch an account of the ſixth daies creation, as is hardly conſiſtent with Gods own teſtimony of its being *very good*, Gen. 1. *Were revenge never ſo much a natural appetite, 'tis not ſo fundamental an one as ſelf-preſervation.*

42. Beſides, 'tis certain all the deſires God infus'd into human nature, were ſuch as tended to its preſervation; but this of revenge, is of all other the moſt deſtructive, as is too ſadly atteſted by the daily tragical effects of it. In ſhort, the wiſe man gives a good ſummary of the whole matter: *God made man upright, but he ſought out many inventions*, Eccl. 7. 29. *Which is contradicted and deſtroied by revenge.*

43. Now if man have by his own voluntary act deprav'd himſelf, it would be neither juſt nor kind in God to warp his Laws to mans now diſtorted frame; but it is both, to keep up the perfect rectitude of thoſe, and call upon man to reduce himſelf to a conformity with them: and when to this is added ſuch a ſupply of grace as may ſilence the plea of diſability, there can nothing be imagin'd more worthy of God, or more indulgent to man. *Were it otherwiſe, Gods laws ought to controul our paſſions.*

44. And all this Chriſt do's in the Goſpel, in thoſe precepts which the blind world makes ſubject of their cavil or ſcorn. It were an eaſy task to evince this in every particular precept of the Goſpel; but I ſhall content my ſelf with the inſtances already given, and not ſwell this Tract by inſiſting upon what has already bin the ſubject of ſo many pious and *Which really are kindneſs to us.*

excellent discourses, as must already have convinc'd all but the obstinate.

Fourthly the promissory part.

45. We proceed therefore to a view of the promissory parts of Scripture; in which we are first in general to observe the great goodness of God, in making any promises at all to us; and next to examin of what nature and excellence these promises are. And first if we consider how many titles God has to our obedience, we must acknowledg he may challenge it as his undoubted right. We are the work of his hands; and if the Potter have power over the clay (the materials whereof are not of his making) much more has God over his creatures, whose matter as well as form is wholly owing to him. We are the price of his blood. And if men account purchase an indefeisible title, God must have absolute dominion over what he has bought, and at so dear a price too as his own blood. Lastly we depend upon him for the support of that being he has given us: we live merely upon his bounty, spend upon his stock. And what Patron will not expect observance from one who thus subsists by him?

God waves native rights and treats us as freemen.

46. Yet as if God had none of these claims, these preingagements upon us, he descends to treat with us as free-men, by way of article and compact; buies his own of us, and engages to reward that obedience, which he might upon the utmost penalties exact: which is such an astonishing indulgence as our highest gratitude cannot reach: and of this the sacred Scriptures are the evidences and records; and therefore upon that account deserve at once our reverence, and our joy.

His promises are so extensive as to take in both our present and future state.

47. But this will yet farther appear, if we look in the second place into the promises themselves; which are so extensive as to take in both our present and future state: according to that of the Apostle; *Godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. For the present, they are proportion'd to the several parts of our composition, the body and the mind, the outward and the inward man; so stretching themselves to all we can really be concern'd for in this world.

48. And first for the body, the Old Testament abounds in promises of this sort. The first part of the 28. of Deut. contains a full catalogue of all temporal blessings; and those irreversibly entail'd upon the Israelites obedience. The Psalmist tells us, *they that fear the Lord shall lack nothiug*, Ps. 34. 9. *that they shall not be confounded in the perillous time, and in daies of dearth they shall have enough*, Ps. 37. 19. And *Solomon, that the Lord will not suffer the righteous to famish*, Pro. 10. 3. And tho under the Gospel, the promises of temporal affluence seem not so large, (its design being to spiritualize us, and raise our minds to higher injoiments;) yet it gives us ample security of so much as is really good for us. It supersedes our care for our selves by assuring us *all these things shall be added to us*, Mat. 6. 3. that is, *all those things which our heavenly Father knows we have need of*, v. 32. which is all the limitation the context gives. And certainly we have little temtation to fear want, who have him for our provider; *whose are all the beasts of the forrest, and the cattel upon a thousand hills*, Ps. 50. 10.

When he has secur'd us from want; 'twill be as great a largess to secure us from abundance.

49. And when we are thus secur'd of all things necessary, it may perhaps be an equal mercy to secure us from great abundance; which at the best, is but a *lading ones self with thick clay*, in the Prophets phrase, *Hab.* 2. 6. but is often a snare as well as a burden.

The Gospels contracting our appetites makes a better provision for us then any affluence could bestow.

50. Besides, the Gospel by its precepts of temperance and self-denial, do's so contract our appetites, that a competence is a more adequate promise to them, then that of superfluity would have bin: and 'tis also the mesure wherein all the true satisfaction of the senses consists; which are gratifi'd with moderat plesures, but suffocated and overwhelm'd with excessive

ceſſive. The temperat man taſts and reliſhes his portion, whilſt the voluptuous may rather be ſaid to wallow in his plenty then enjoy it.

Not only the neceſſaries of life, but life it ſelf is ſecur'd by Scripture promiſe.

51 And as the neceſſaries of life, ſo life it ſelf, and the continuance of that, is a Scripture promiſe. The fifth Commandment affixes it to one particular duty: but it is in a multitude of places in the Old Teſtament annex'd to general obedience. Thus it is, *Deut.* 11. 9. and again, ver. 21. And *Solomon* propoſes this practical wiſdom as the multiplier of daies: *By me thy daies ſhall be multipli'd, and the years of thy life ſhall be increas'd*, Prov. 9. 11. and chap. 3. *Length of daies is in her right hand*, verſe 16. And tho we find not this promiſe repeted in the New Teſtament, yet neither is it retracted: 'tis true, the Goſpel bids us be ready to lay down our lives for Chriſts ſake, but it tells us withall, that he that will loſe his life, ſhall ſave it: which tho it be univerſally true only in the ſpiritual ſenſe, yet it often proves ſo in a literal. It did ſo eminently in the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, where the moſt reſolute Chriſtians eſcap'd, while the baſe compliers periſh'd together with thoſe they ſought to endear. This is certain, that if the New Teſtament do not expreſly promiſe long life, yet it do's by its rules of temperance and ſobriety, contentedneſs and chearfulneſs, very much promote it: and ſo do's vertually and efficaciouſly ratify thoſe the Old Teſtament made.

So alſo is reputation.

52. The next outward bleſſing is reputation: and this alſo is a Scripture promiſe. *The wiſe ſhall inherit glory*, Prov. 3. 38. And the vertuous woman *Solomon* deſcribes, is not only bleſſed by her children and husband, but *ſhe is praiſed in the gate*, Prov. 31. *ult.* Nay, this bleſſing is extended even beyond life: *The memory of the juſt ſhall be bleſſed*, Prov. 10. 7. Nor do's the Goſpel evacuate this promiſe; but rather promts us to the waies of having it made good to us, by adviſing us to *abſtain from all appearance of evil*, 1 Theſ. 5. 22. *to provide for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of God, but alſo in the ſight of men*, 2 Cor. 8. 21.

If revilings happen, they are made moſt honorable.

53. 'Tis true indeed, Chriſt fore-warns his Diſciples that they ſhall be revil'd, *and have all manner of evil ſpoken againſt them falſly, for his names ſake*: but then the cauſe transform'd the ſufferings, and made it ſo honorable, that they were *to count it matter of joy*, Mat. 5. 11, 12. Neither was this any paradox even in relation to their reputation; which tho ſullied by a few ill men of that age, yet has been moſt illuſtrious among all Ages ſince. Their ſufferings and indignities gave them a new title of honor, and added the Martyr to the Apoſtle. And the event has bin proportionable in all ſucceſſions ſince: thoſe holy men that fill'd up the Pagan priſons, fill'd up the Churches Diptycs alſo, and has bin had as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *in everlaſting remembrance*, Pſal. 112. 6.

The Scripture promiſes look more expreſly to the concerns of the inward man.

54. And as the Scripture promiſes thus take in all the concerns of the outward man, ſo do they alſo of the inward. The fundamental promiſe of this kind, is that of *ſending Chriſt into the world*, and *in him eſtabliſhing the new Covenant*, which we find, *Jer.* 31. 31. and is referr'd to by the Author to the Hebrews, *I will put my Laws in their hearts, and write them in their minds, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more*, Heb. 10. 16.

Whoſe evils are either impurity, or inquietude.

55. And this is ſo comprehenſive a promiſe as includes all the concerns of the inward man. The evils incident to the mind of man may be reduc'd to two; impurity, and inquietude: and here is a cure to both. The divine Law written in the heart, drives thence all thoſe ſwarms of noyſom luſts, which like the Egyptian Frogs over-run and putrify the ſoul. Where that is ſeated and enſhrin'd, thoſe can no more ſtand before it, then *Dagon* before the Ark. This repairs the divine Image in us (in which con-

the perfection of our nature) *renews us in the spirit of our minds*, Eph. 4. 22. *and purges our consciences from dead works*, Heb. 9. 4. which all the Cathartics and Lustrations among the Heathen, all the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Law were not able to do.

The subjection to lust is the vilest vassalage.

56. Secondly, this promise secures the mind from that restlesness and unquietness, which attends both the dominion and guilt of sin. To be subject to a mans lusts and corrupt appetites is of all others the vilest vassallage: they are the cruellest task-masters, and allow their slaves no rest, no intermission of their drudgery. And then again, the guilt that tortures and racks the mind with dreadful expectations, keeps it in perpetual agitation and tumult; which is excellently describ'd by the prophet *Isaiah*, *The wicked is like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; whose waters cast out mire and dirt: there is no peace saith my God to the wicked*, Is. 48. 22. How prosperous soever vice may seem to be in the world, yet there are such secret pangs and horrors that dog it, that as *Solomon* saies, *even in laughter the heart is sorrowful*, Prov. 14. 13.

From which the Gospel rescues.

57. But this Evangelical promise of being *merciful to our iniquities, and remembring our sins no more*, calms this tempest, introduces peace and serenity into the mind, and reconciles us at once to God and our selves. And sure we may well say with the Apostle, these are *great and precious promises*, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

The scriptures give promises of grace and Divine assistance.

58. There are besides many other which spring from this principal, as suckers from the root: such are the promises of fresh supplies of grace upon a good imploiment of the former. *To him that hath shall be given*, Mat. 25. 29. Nay, even of the source and fountain of all grace. *He shall give the holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Mat. 7. 11. Such is that of supporting us in all difficulties and assaults: *the not suffering us to be temted above that we are able*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. which like Gods *bow set in the clouds*, Gen. 9. is our security, that we shall not be over-whelm'd by any deluge of temtation: and (to instance no more) such is that comprehensive promise of hearing our praiers, *Ask and it shall be given you*, Matth. 7. 7. This puts all good things within our reach, gives us the key of Gods Store-house, from whence we may furnish our selves with all that is really good for us. And if a few full Barns could temt the rich man in the Gospel, to pronounce a Requiem to his soul; what notes of acquiescence may they sing, who have the command of an inexhaustible store; that are suppli'd by him whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof?

Then which nothing can give greater comfort and support amidst the calamities of life.

59. And certainly, all these promises together must be (to use the Apostles phrase) *strong consolation*; such as may quiet and calm all the fears and griefs, all the tumults and perturbations of the mind, in relation to its present state. But then there are others relating to the future of a much higher elevation: those glories and felicities of another world, which are so far beyond our narrow conceptions, that the comprehension and injoiment must begin together. The Scripture shadows it out to us by all the notions we have of happiness: by *glory*, Rom. 8. 18. by a *kingdom*, Mat. 25. 14. by *joy*, Mat. 25. 21. and which comprehends all, by *being with the Lord*, 1 Thes. 4. 17. *seeing him face to face*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *being like to him*, 1 Joh. 3. 2. In a word 'tis *bliss* in the utmost extent: immense for quantity, and eternal for duration.

The promises are of things excellent in their kind as well as liberal in their degree.

60. And surely this promise is so excellent for kind, so liberal in its degree, so transcendently great in all respects, that did it stand single, stript of all those that relate to this life, it alone would justify the name of Gospel, and be the best tidings that ever came to mankind. For alas, if we compare the hopes that other Religions propose to their Votaries with these, how

how baſe, how ignoble are they! The Heathens Elyſium, the Mahumetan Paradiſe, were but higher gratifications of the ſenſual part, and conſequently were depreſſions and debaſements of the rational. So that in effect they provided a heaven for the beaſt, and a hell for the man. We may therefore confidently reſume our concluſion, and pronounce the Scripture promiſes to be ſo Divine and excellent, that they could as little have bin made, as they can be perform'd by any but an holy and almighty Author.

Their condition ſuch as is no impeachment of their worth.

61. Nor is their being conditional any impeachment to their worth, but an enhancement. Should God have made them (as ſom fancy he has his decrees) abſolute and irreſpective; he had ſet his promiſes at war with his precepts, and theſe ſhould have ſuperſeded what thoſe injoin. We are all very niggardly towards God, and ſhould have bin apt to have ask'd *Judas*'s queſtion; *to what purpoſe is this waſt?* Matt.26.8. What needs the labor of the courſe if the prize be certain? And it muſt have bin infinitly below the wiſdom and majeſty of the ſupreme Legiſlator, to make Laws, and then evacuate them by diſpencing rewards without any aſpect on their obſervance. 'Tis the Sanction which inſpirits the Law, without which the Divine, as well as the human, would to moſt men be a *dead letter.*

The conditionality of the promiſes, backt with threats is deſign'd to force us to happineſs.

62. But againſt this God has abundantly provided, not only by the conditionality of the promiſes, but by the terror of his threats too; which is the laſt part of Scripture which falls under conſideration. And theſe are of the moſt direful kinds; and cannot better be illuſtrated then by the oppoſition they ſtand in to the promiſes: for as thoſe included all things that might make men happy either as to this life or the next; ſo theſe do all that make them miſerable. If we make our reflection on all the particulars of the promiſes, we ſhall find the threats anſwering them as their reverſe or dark ſhadow.

Firſt the threats that concern the outward ſtate.

63. And firſt as concerning the outward ſtate, if we look but into the 28 of *Deut.* we ſhall find, that after all the gracious promiſes which begun the chapter, it finally ends in thunder, in the moſt dreadful denunciations imaginable; and thoſe adapted by a moſt peculiar oppoſition to the former promiſes: as the Reader may ſee at large in that Chapter. And the whole tenor of the Scripture go's in the like ſtile. Thus, Pſ.140.11. *A wicked perſon ſhall not proſper in the earth, evill ſhall hunt the wicked man to overthrow him. The Lord will not ſuffer the righteous to famiſh, but he caſteth out the ſubſtance of the wicked,* Prov. 10. 3. And again, the *righteous eateth to the ſatisfying of his ſoul, but the belly of the wicked ſhall want,* Prov. 13. 25. Multitudes of like general threatnings of temporal improſperity there are every where ſcatter'd thro out the Scripture; and many more appli'd to particular vices, as ſloth, unmercifulneſs, luxury, and the like; which would be here too long to enumerate.

Which are verified notwithſtanding the ſeeming proſperity of wicked men.

64. And altho theſe threatnings may ſeem ſomtimes to be literally confuted by the wealth and opulency of wicked men, yet they never miſs of being really and vertually verified. For either their proſperities are very ſhort, and only preparative to a more eminent ruin, which was the Pſalmiſts reſolution of this doubt, *Pſal.* 72. or elſe if God leave them the matters of temporal happineſs, yet he ſubſtracts the vertue and ſpirit of them, renders them emty and unſatisfying. This is well expreſt by the Pſalmiſt in the caſe of the Iſraelites: *He gave them their deſire, and ſent leanneſs withall into their ſoul,* Pſal. 106. 15. and by *Zophar*, Job 20. 22. where ſpeaking of the wicked, he ſaith; *In the fulneſs of his ſufficiency ſhall he be in ſtraits.* And to this *Solomon* ſeems to refer, when he ſaith, *the bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich & he addeth no ſorrow with it,* Prov. 10. 22.

Not only untimely death, but the rotting of the name and a curse of their posterity, are threatned to wicked men.

65. Neither is it only the comforts of life, but life it self that is threatned to be taken from wicked men: untimely death is throout the Old Testament frequently mention'd as the guerdon of impiety: 'tis often assign'd judicially in particular cases: *He shall be cut off from his people*, being the usual sentence upon most offenders under the Levitical Law. But 'tis also menaced more generally as an immediat judgment from God: *The blood-thirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their daies*, Psal. 55. 23. Farther yet, their names shall putrify as soon as their Carkasses; *the name of the wicked shall rot*, Prov. 10. 7. Nay both their infamy and their ruin are intail'd upon their posterity. *The seed of evil doers shall never be renown'd. Prepare slaughter for his children, for the inquity of their fathers*, Isa. 14. 20, 21.

Wicked men are aliens from the covenant of Grace.

66. If now we look on Scripture threatnings in relation to the mind of man, we shall find them yet more severe: wilful impenitent sinners being cut off from the benefits of the new covenant; nor barely so, but look'd upon as despisers of it, and that blood of Christ in which it was seal'd, *Heb.* 10. 29. nay as those murtherous Wretches that shed it: *They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh*, Heb. 6. 6. And this is the fatallest sentence that can fall on any man in this life; to be thus disfranchised of all the privileges of the Gospel, and rankt as well in punishment as guilt, with the most criminous of mankind.

And at last brought to a state of reprobation.

67. From hence 'tis consequent, that the mind remains not only in its native impurity, but in a greater and more incurable one; whilst that bloud which alone could cleanse it, serves but to embrue and pollute it; and as it were flush, and excite it to all immanities and vilenesses: and *he that is* thus *filthy*, 'tis the doom pronounc'd against him, that he *shall be filthy still*, Rev. 22. 11.

Nothing can be more miserable then this prostigat condition.

68. And then in the second place, what calm can there be to such a mind? What remains to such a person, but that *fearful expectation of wrath and fiery indignation*, which the Apostle mentions, *Heb.* 10. 27? Indeed, were there none but temporal mischiefs to fear, yet it were very unpleasant to think ones self, like *Cain*, out-law'd from the presence and protection of God, to be afraid *that every man that meets us should slay us*, Gen. 4. 14. Nay, those confus'd indistinct fears of indefinite evils which attend guilt, are very unquiet, uneasy inmates in the mind. This is excellently describ'd by *Moses*; *The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eies, and sorrow of mind, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night; in the morning thou shalt say, would God it were evening, and in the evening, would God it were morning*, Deut. 28. 65, 66, 67.

Gods wrath comprehends all that human nature can suffer.

69. And what can be more wretched then to have a mind thus agitated and tost, rackt and tortur'd; especially when thro all these clouds it sees a glimpse of the eternal Tophet, and knows, that from the billows of this uneasy state, it must be tost into that Lake of fire. And this is indeed *the dregs of the cup of Gods wrath*, the dreadfullest and most astonishing of all Scripture denunciations. This comprehends all that the nature of man is capable of suffering. Divines distinguish it into the pain of sense, and of loss: that of sense is represented to us in Scripture by fire; and that accended, and render'd noisom as well as painful by brimstone, that afflicts the smell as well as the touch; somtimes by *outer darkness wailing and gnashing of teeth*, to grate the ears, and consume the eies; by intolerable thirst, to torment the palate. Not that we are to think the sensitive pains of Hell do not infinitly exceed all these;

theſe; but becauſe theſe are the higheſt meſures our preſent capacities can make, and are adequate to thoſe ſenſes for whoſe carnal ſatisfactions we incur them.

Pain of ſenſe ſeems outdon by that of loſs.

70. The pain of loſs is yet more diſmal; as being ſeated in the Soul, whoſe ſpiritual nature will then ſerve it only to render its torments more refin'd and acute. With what anguiſh will it then ſee it ſelf baniſh'd from the preſence of God; and conſequently from all that may give ſatisfaction and bliſs to the creature? But yet with how much deeper anguiſh will it reflect on it ſelf as the Author of that deprivation? How will it recollect the many deſpis'd tenders of grace, the eaſy terms on which ſalvation might have bin had? And how ſadly will conſcience then revenge all its ſtifled admonitions by an unſilenceable clamor, *that worm which never dies*, Mark 9. 48? How wounding will it then be *to ſee* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, and all the Saints *in the kingdom of God*, Luke 13. 28. (nay, that poor *Lazarus* whom here men turn'd over to the charity of their dogs) and it ſelf in the company of the devil and his angels, who will then upbraid what they once intic'd to?

Which has the embitterments of ſhame and diſpair.

71. Nature abhors nothing more then to have our miſery inſulted over by thoſe who drew us into it: yet that no circumſtance may be lacking to their torment, this muſt be the perpetual entertainment of damn'd ſouls. And to all this Eternity is the diſmal adjunct; which is of all other circumſtances the moſt diſconſolate, as leaving not ſo much as a glimpſe of hopes; which here uſes ſtill to be the reſerve, and laſt reſort of the miſerable.

Eſpecially having that laſt heightning circumſtance of Eternity.

72. This Eternity is that which gives an edg, infuſes a new acrimony into the torments: and is the higheſt ſtrain, the vertical point of miſery. Theſe are thoſe *terrors of the Lord*, with which the Scripture acquaints us: and ſure we cannot ſay that theſe are flat contemtible menaces; but ſuch as ſuit the dreadful Majeſty of that *God who is a conſuming fire*, Heb. 12. 29. So that theſe are as aptly accommodated for the exciting our dread, as the promiſes were of our love: both jointly concur to awake our induſtry.

But Gods goodneſs has made theſe threats conditional as well as his promiſes.

73. For God has bin ſo good to mankind, as to make the threats conditional as well as the promiſes: ſo that we as well know the way to avoid the one, as we do to attain the other. Nor has he any other intendment or end in promiſing them, but that we may do ſo. See to this purpoſe, with what ſolemnity he proteſts it by *Moſes*; *I call heaven and earth to record againſt you this day that I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and curſing; therefore chuſe life, that both thou and they ſeed may live*, Deut. 30. 19.

In all reſpects the Scripture appears to be correſpondent to its Author.

74. I have now run thro the ſeveral parts of Scripture I propoſed to ſpeak of. And tho I have in each given rather ſhort inſtances and eſſaies then an exact deſcription, yet even in theſe contracted lineaments the exquiſit proportions may be diſcern'd. And if the Reader ſhall hence be incourag'd to extend his contemplations, and as he reads holy Scripture, obſerve it in all its graces, and full dimenſions; I doubt not he will pronounce from his experience, that the matter of the Divine Book is very correſpondent to the Author: which is the higheſt Eulogy imaginable.

The holy Scripture conſider'd in relation to its end.

75. In the next place we are to conſider the holy Scripture in relation to its end and deſign; in proportion to which every thing is more or leſs valuable. The moſt exquiſit frame, and curious contrivance, that has no determinat end or uſe, is but a piece of induſtrious folly, a *Spiders web*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 59. 5. Now thoſe deſigns have alwaies been eſteem'd

esteem'd the most excellent that have had the most worthy subjects, and bin of the greatest extent. Accordingly, those who have projected the obliging and benefiting of other men (tho but within a privat Sphere) have alwaies bin lookt on as men of generous and noble designs. Those who have taken their level higher, and directed their aim to a more public good, tho but of a City or Nation, have proportionably acquir'd a greater esteem. But those who have aspired to be universal benefactors, to do somthing for the common benefit of the world, their fame has commonly reach'd as far as their influence; men have reverenc'd, nay somtimes (according to the common excesses of mans nature) ador'd them. Many of the heathen deities (especially their demigods) having bin only those persons, who by introducing som useful Art, or other part of knowledg, had oblig'd mankind. So we see what a natural gratitude men are apt to pay to worthy and generous designs. And if we will be content but to stand to this common award of our nature, the Scripture will have the fairest claim imaginable to our reverence and thankfulness upon this very account of the excellency of its designs.

Things are valuable with us from the profit they bring, and their diffusiveness.

76. Nor need we borrow the balance of the Sanctuary to weigh them in, we may do it in our own scales; for they exactly answer the two properties above mention'd, of profit and diffusiveness which in secular concerns are the standard rules of good designs. For first, it is the sole scope and aim of Scripture, the very end for which 'twas writ, to benefit and advantage men; and that secondly, not only som small select number, som little angle or corner of the world, but the whole race of mankind, the entire Universe; and he that can imagin a more diffusive design, must imagin more worlds also.

The end of the Scripture is our good.

77. Now for the first of these, that it is the design of the Scripture to benefit men, we need appeal but to Scripture it self; which surely can give account to what ends 'tis directed; and that tells us, it *is to make us wise unto Salvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. In which is comprehended the greatest benefit that mans nature is capable of: the making us wise while we live here, and the saving us eternally. And this sure is the most generous, the most obliging design, that 'tis possible even for the Creator to have upon the creature: and this is it which the holy Scripture negotiates with us.

To make wise.

78. And first, the making us wise, is so inviting a proposal to humanity, that we see when that was much wiser then now it is, it caught at a fallacious tender of it; the very sound of it, tho out of the devils mouth, fascinated our first Parents, and hurried them to the highest disobedience, and certainest ruin. And therefore now God by the holy Scriptures makes us an offer as much more safe, as it is more sincere; when he sends his Word thus to be *a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths*, Psal. 119. 105. to teach us all that is good for us to know, our affectation of ignorance will be more culpable then theirs of knowledg, if we do not admire the kindness, and embrace the bounty of such a tender.

Not indeed in the popular notion.

79. Now the making us wise must be understood according to the Scripture notion of wisdom, which is *not the wisdom of this world, nor of the Princes of this world, which come to nought*, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 2. 5. *but that wisdom which descends from above*, Jam. 3. 17. which he there describes to be *first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* Indeed the Scripture usually comprehends these and all other graces under Wisdom; for it makes it synonymous to that which includes them all, *viz.* the fear of the

of the Lord. Thus we find throout the whole Book of Proverbs theſe us'd as terms convertible. In ſhort, Wiſdom is that practical knowledg of God and our ſelves which engages us to obedience and duty; and this is agreeable to that definition the Wiſe man gives of it; *The wiſdom of the prudent is to underſtand his way*, Prov. 14. 8. Without this, all the moſt refin'd and aerial ſpeculations, are but like *Thales*'s ſtar-gazing; which ſecur'd him not from falling in the water; nay, betrai'd him to it. In this is all ſolid wiſdom compris'd.

It leads to our true intereſts.

80. The utmoſt all the wiſe men in the world have pretended to, is but to know what true happineſs is, and what is the means of attaining it: and what they ſought with ſo much ſtudy, and ſo little ſucceſs, the Scripture preſents us with in the greateſt certainty, and plainneſt characters, ſuch as *he that runs may read*, Hab. 2. 2. It acquaints us with that ſupreme felicity, that chief good whereof Philoſophy could only give us a name; and it ſhews us the means, marks us out a path which will infallibly lead us to it. Accordingly we find that *Solomon* after all the accurate ſearch he had made to find *what was that good for the ſons of men*; he ſhuts up his inqueſt in this plain concluſion: *Fear God and keep his commandments*; *for God ſhall bring every work unto judgment*, Eccleſ. 12. 15, 16. The regulating our lives ſo by the rules of Piety, as may acquit us at our final account, is the moſt eligible thing that falls within human cognizance; and that not only in relation to the ſuperlative happineſs of the next world, but even to the quiet and tranquillity of this. For alas, we are impotent giddy creatures, ſwai'd ſomtimes by one paſſion, ſomtimes by another; nay often the interfering of our appetites makes us irreſolute which we are to gratify, whilſt in the interim their ſtrugling agitates and turmoils the mind. And what can be more deſirable in ſuch a caſe, then to put our ſelves under a wiſer conduct then our own; and as oppreſt States uſe to defeat all leſſer pretenders by becoming homagers to ſom more potent: ſo for us to deliver our ſelves from the tyranny of our luſts, by giving up our obedience to him whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom.

Shews every man the terms of his ſubjection.

81. Were there no other advantage of the exchange, but the bringing us under fixt and determinat Laws, 'twere very conſiderable. Every man would gladly know the terms of his ſubjection, and have ſom ſtanding rule to guide himſelf by; and Gods Laws are ſo, we may certainly know what he requires of us: but the mandats of our paſſions are arbitrary and extemporary: what pleaſes them to day, diſguſts them to morrow; and we muſt alwaies be in readineſs to do we know not what, and of all the Arbitrary governments that men either feel or fear, this is doubtleſs the moſt miſerable. I wiſh our apprehenſions of it were but as ſenſible: and then we ſhould think the holy Scripture did us the office of a Patriot, in offering us a reſcue from ſo vile a ſlavery.

Shews the ſervility of being engag'd by luſt and ſenſuality.

82. And that it do's make us this offer, is manifeſt by the whole tenor of the Bible. For firſt it rowzes and awakes us to a ſenſe of our condition, ſhews us that what we call liberty, is indeed the ſaddeſt ſervitude; that *he that commiteth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin*, John 8. 34. that thoſe vices which pretend to ſerve and gratify us, do really ſubdue and enſlave us, and fetter when they ſeem to embrace: and whereas the will in all other oppreſſions retaines its liberty, this tyranny brings that alſo into vaſſallage: renders our ſpirits ſo mean and ſervile, that we chuſe bondage; are apt to ſay with the Iſraelites, *Let us alone that we may ſerve the Egyptians*, Exod. 14. 12.

And animates to recover liberty.

83. And what greater kindneſs can be don for people in this forlorn abject condition, then to animate them to caſt off this yoke, and recover their

freedom. And to this are most of the Scripture exhortations addrest; as may be seen in a multitude of places, particularly in the sixth chapter to the *Romans*, the whole scope whereof is directly to this purpose.

Gives weapons and armor for the rescue.

84. Nor do's it only sound the alarm, put us upon the contest with our enemies, but it assists us in it, furnishes us with that *whole armor of God* which we find describ'd, *Eph.* 6. 13. Nay further, it excites our courage, by assuring us that if we will not basely surrender our selves, we can never be overpower'd if we do but stand our ground; resist our enemy, he *will fly from us*, James 4. 7. And to that purpose it directs us under what banner we are to list our selves; even his who *hath spoil'd principalities and powers*, Col. 2. 15. to whose conduct and discipline if we constantly adhere, we cannot miss of victory.

Sets before us the prize of the conquest.

85. And then lastly it sets before us the prize of this conquest; that we shall not only recover our liberty, manumit our selves from the vilest bondage to the vilest and cruellest oppressors; but we shall be crown'd for it too, be rewarded for being kind to our selves, and be made happy eternally hereafter for being willing to be happy here.

And qualifies for the rewards of it.

86. And sure these are terms so apparently advantageous, that he must be infinitly stupid, fooliſh to destruction, that will not be thus made wise unto salvation, that despises or cavils at this Divine Book, which means him so much good, which designs to make him live here generously and according to the dignity of his nature, and in the next world to have that nature sublimated and exalted, made more capacious of those refin'd and immense felicities, which there await all who will qualify themselves for them; *who* (as the Apostle speaks) *by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life*, Rom. 2. 7.

The Scriptures consult for our temporal interest.

87. But besides the greatest and principal advantages which concern our spiritual interest, it takes in also the care of our secular, directs us to such a managery of our selves, as is naturally apt to promote a quiet and happy life. Its injunction to live peaceably with all men, keeps us out of the way of many misadventures, which turbulent unruly spirits meet with, and so secures our peace. So also as to wealth, it puts us into the fairest road to riches by prescribing diligence in our callings: what is thus got being like sound flesh, which will stick by us; whereas the hasty growth of ill-gotten wealth is but a tumor and impostume, which the bigger it swells, the sooner it bursts and leaves us lanker then before. In like manner it shews us also how to guard our reputation, by *providing honest things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men*, 2 Cor. 8. 21. *by abstaining even from all appearance of evil*, 1 Thess. 5. 22. and *making our light shine before men*, Mat. 5. 16. It provides too for our ease and tranquillity, supersedes our anxious cares and sollicitudes by directing us to *cast our burden upon the Lord*, Psal. 55. 22. and by a reliance on his providence how to secure to our selves all we really want. Finally it fixes us in all the changes, supports us under all the pressures, comforts us amidst all the calamities of this life, by assuring us they shall *all work together for good to those that love God*, Rom. 8. 28.

And that not only personal, but in reference to communities.

88. Nor do's the Scripture design to promote our interests consider'd only singly and personally, but also in relation to Societies and Communities; it gives us the best rules of distributive and commutative Justice; teaches us to *render to all their dues*, Rom. 13. 7. to keep our words, to observe inviolably all our pacts and contracts; nay tho *they prove to our damage*, Psal. 15. 4. and to preserve exact fidelity and truth; which are the sinews of human commerce. It infuses into us noble and generous principles, to prefer a common good before our private: and that highest flight of Ethnic

vertue,

vertue, that of dying for ones Country, is no more then the Scripture preſcribes even for our common brethren, 1 *John* 3. 16.

89. But beſides theſe generals, it deſcends to more minute directions accommodated to our ſeveral circumſtances; it gives us appropriate rules in reference to our diſtinct relations, whether natural, civil, eccleſiaſtical, or œconomical. And if men would but univerſally conform to them, to what a bleſſed harmony would it tune the world? What order and peace would it introduce? There would then be no oppreſſive Governors, nor mutinous Subjects; no unnatural Parents, nor contumacious Children: no idle Shepherds, or ſtraying Flocks: none of thoſe domeſtic jars which oft diſquiet, and ſomtimes ſubvert families: all would be calm and ſerene; and give us in reality that golden Age, whereof the Poets did but dream.

This it do's in reference to all intereſts, whether civil, eccleſiaſtical or œconomical.

90. This tendency of the Scripture is remarkably acknowledg'd in all our public Judicatories, where before any teſtimony is admitted, we cauſe the perſon that is to give his teſtimony, firſt to lay hold of with his hands, then with his mouth to kiſs the holy Scriptures: as if it were impoſſible for thoſe hands, which held the myſteries of Truth, to be immediatly emploi'd in working falſe-hood; or that thoſe lips which had ador'd thoſe holy Oracles, ſhould be polluted with perjuries and lies. And I fear, the civil Government is exceedingly ſhaken at this day in its firmeſt foundation, by the little regard is generally had of the holy Scriptures, and what is conſequent thereto, the oaths that are taken upon them.

This tendency of the Scripture is acknowledg'd in our public Judicatories, where no teſtimony is admitted, till the witneſs has kiſt the book.

91. 'Tis true, we are far remov'd from that ſtate which *Eſaiah* propheſied of under the Goſpel, tho we have the Bible among us; that when *the Law ſhould go forth of* Sion, *and the word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem, *they ſhould beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks*, Eſ. 2. 4. but that is not from any defect in it, but from our own perverſneſs: *we have it*, (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in another ſenſe) *as if we had it not*, 1 Cor. 7. 29. We have it (that is, uſe it) to purpoſes widely different from what it means. Som have it as a *Superſedeas* to all the duty it injoins; and ſo they can but cap texts, talk glibly of Scripture, are not at all concern'd to practice it: ſom have it as their Arſenal, to furniſh them with weapons, not againſt their ſpiritual enemies, but their ſecular: applying all the damnatory ſentences they there find, to all thoſe to whoſe perſons or opinions they have prejudice. And ſom have it as a Scene of their mirth, a topic of raillery, dreſs their profane and ſcurrilous jeſts in its language; and ſtudy it for no other end but to abuſe it. And whilſt we treat it at this vile rate, no wonder we are never the better for it. For alas, what will it avail us to have the moſt ſoveraign Balſom in our poſſeſſion, if inſtead of applying it to our wounds, we trample it under our feet.

That we have not the Prophecy fulfill'd of beating ſwords into plow-ſhares, is not from defect in the Scripture, but our perverſeneſs.

92. But tho we may fruſtrate the uſe, we cannot alter the nature of things. Gods deſign in giving us the Scripture was to make us as happy as our nature is capable of being; and the Scripture is excellently adapted to this end: for as to our eternal felicity, all that believe there is any ſuch ſtate, muſt acknowledg the Scripture chalks us out the ready way to it: not only becauſe 'tis dictated by God who infallibly knows it, but alſo by its preſcribing thoſe things which are in themſelves beſt; and which a ſober Heathen would adjudg fitteſt to be rewarded. And as to our temporal happineſs, I dare appeal to any unprejudic'd man, whether any thing can contribute more to the peace and real happineſs of mankind, then the uni-

Tho we can fruſtrate the uſe, we cannot alter the nature of things.

versal practice of the Scripture rules would do. Would God we would all conspire to make the experiment; and then doubtless, not only our reason, but our sense too would be convinc'd of it.

The benefit of the Scripture is as extensive as great.

93. And as the design is thus beneficial, so in the second place is it as extensive also. Time was when the Jews had the inclosure of Divine Revelation; when the Oracles of God were their peculiar *depositum*, and the *Heathen had not the knowledg of his Laws*, Psal. 147. *ult.* but since that by the goodness of God the *Gentiles are* become *fellow-heirs*, Eph. 3. 6. he hath also deliver'd into their hands the deeds and evidences of their future state, given them the holy Scriptures as the exact and authentic registers of the covenant between God and man, and these not to be like the heathen Oracles appropriated to som one or two particular places, so that they cannot be consulted but at the expence of a pilgrimage; but laid open to the view of all that will believe themselves concern'd.

The Gospel is preacht to every creature.

94. It was a large commission our Savior gave his Disciples: *go preach the Gospel to every creature*, Mark 16. 15. (which in the narrowest acception must be the Gentile world) and yet their oral Gospel did not reach farther then the written: for wherever the Christian Faith was planted, the holy Scriptures were left as the records of it; nay, as the conservers of it too, the standing rule by which all corruptions were to be detected. 'Tis true, the entire Canon of the Testament, as we now have it, was not all at once deliver'd to the Church; the Gospels and Epistles being successively writ, as the needs of Christians, and the encrochments of Heretics gave occasion: but at last they became all together the common magazine of the Church, to furnish arms both defensive and offensive. For as the Gospel puts in our hands the shield of Faith, so the Epistles help us to hold it, that it may not be wrested out of our hands again, either by the force of persecution, or the sly insinuations of vice or heresy.

And consign'd in writing, not only to establish Faith but discover and beat down growing errors.

95. Thus the Apostles like prudent leaders have beat up the Ambushes, discover'd the snares that were laid for us; and by discomfiting Satans forlorn hope, that earliest Set of false teachers and corrupt practices which then invaded the Church, have laid a foundation of victory to the succeeding Ages, if they will but keep close to their conduct, adhere to those sacred Writings they have left behind them in every Church for that purpose.

Which writings as they are every ones concern and property, are no mans enclosure.

96. Now what was there depositted, was design'd for the benefit of every particular member of that Church. The Bible was not committed (like the *Regalia*, or rarities of a Nation) to be kept under lock and key (and consequently to constitute a profitable office for the keepers) but expos'd like the Brazen Serpent for universal view and benefit: that sacred Book (like the common air) being every mans propriety, yet no mans inclosure: yet there are a generation of men whose eies have bin evil, because Gods have bin good: who have seal'd up this spring, monopoliz'd the word of Life, and will allow none to partake of it but such persons, and in such proportions as they please to retail it: an attemt very insolent in respect of God, whose purpose they contradict; and very injurious in respect of man, whose advantage they obstruct. The iniquity of it will be very apparent, if we consider what is offer'd in the following Section.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The Custody of the holy Scripture is a privilege and right of the Christian Church, and every member of it; which cannot without impiety to God, and injustice unto it and them, be taken away or empeacht.

BEsides the keeping of the Divine law, which is obsequious, and imports a due regard to all its Precepts, commonly expresst in Scripture by *keeping the commandments, hearkning to, and obeying the voice of the Lord, walking in his waies, and observing and doing his statutes and his judgments:* there is a possessory keeping it, in reference to our selves and others; in respect whereof, Almighty God, *Deut.* 6. and elsewhere frequently, having enjoin'd the people of *Israel, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might, and that the words which he commanded them should be in their hearts,* he adds, *that they shall teach them diligently to their children, and shall talk of them when they sit down in their houses, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down, and when they rise up: and that they bind them for a sign upon their hand, and that they shall be as frontlets between their eies, and that they shall write them upon the posts of their house, and on their gates.* So justly was the Law call'd the Scripture, being written by them, and worn upon the several parts of the body, inscrib'd upon the walls of their houses, the entrance of their dores, and gates of their Cities; and in a word, placed before their eies wherever they convers'd. *The keeping of the law is either obsequions or possessory.*

2. And this was granted to the Jews, as matter of privilege and favor. *To them,* saies Saint *Paul,* Rom. 9. 4. *pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law.* And the same Saint *Paul,* at the 3. chap. 2. v. of that Epistle, unto the question, *what advantage hath the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision,* answers, that it is *much every way, chiefly because unto them were committed the Oracles of God.* This *depositum* or trust was granted to the Fathers, that it should be continued down unto their children. *He made a covenant,* saies *David,* Ps. 78. v. 5. *with Jacob, and gave Israel a law, which he commanded our fore-fathers to teach their children, that their posterity might know it, and the children which are yet unborn: to the intent that when they came up, they might shew their children the same.* Which Scripture by a perpetual succession was to be handed down unto the Christian Church; the Apostles on all occasions appealing unto them, as being *read in the synagogues every sabbath day,* Acts 13. 27. and also privatly, in their hands; so that they might at pleasure *search into them,* John 5. 39. Acts 17. 11. Hereupon the Jews are by Saint *Austin* call'd the *Capsarii,* or servants that carried the Christians Books. And *Athanasius* in his Tract of the Incarnation, saies, *The Law was not for the Jews only, nor were the Prophets sent for them alone; but that Nation was the Divinity-Schole of the whole world; from whence they were to fetch the knowledge of God, and the way of spiritual living:* which amounts to what the Apostle saies, Galat. 3. 24. *That the law was a schole-master to bring us unto Christ.* *The possessory keeping was matter of privilege to the Jews.*

3. And 'tis observable that the very same word, *Rom.* 3. 2. in the Text even now recited, which expresses the *committing* of the Oracles of God to the Jews, is made use of constantly by Saint *Paul,* when he declares *And is continued to the Christians.*

the trust and duty incumbent on him in the preaching of the Gospel: of which, see 1 *Cor.* 9. 17. *Gal.* 2. 7. 1 *Thes.* 2. 4. 1. *Tim.* 1. 11. *Tit.* 1. 3. And therefore, as he saies, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16, 17. *Tho I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me, yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel, for if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.* So may all Christians say; if we our selves keep and transmit to our posterities the holy Scriptures, we have nothing to glory of, for a necessity is laid upon us, and wo be unto us if we do not our selves keep, and transmit to our posterity the holy Scriptures. If we do this thing willingly, we have a reward; but if against our will, the custody of the Gospel, and at least that dispensation of it, is committed to us. But if we are Traditors, and give up our Bibles, or take them away from others; let us consider how black an apostacy and sacrilege we shall incur.

The Mosaic law was a temporary constitution.

4. The Mosaic Law was a temporary constitution, and only *a shadow of good things to come*, Heb. 10. 1. but the Gospel being in its duration as well as its intendment, *everlasting*, Rev. 14. 6. and to remain *when time shall be no more*, Rev. 10. 6. it is an infinitly more precious *depositum*, and so with greater care and solemner attestation to be preserv'd. Not only the Clergy, or the people of one particular Church, nor the Clergy of the universal are intrusted with this care; but 'tis the charge, the privilege and duty of every Christian man, that either is, or was, or shall be in the world; even that collective Church which above all competition, *is the pillar and ground of truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. against which the assaults of men and devils, and even the *gates of hell shall not prevail*, Mat. 16. 18.

The Gospels and Epistles were directed to the Christian Church.

5. The Gospels were not written by their holy Pen-men to instruct the Apostles, but to the Christian Church, *that they might believe Jesus was the Christ, the son of God, and that believing they might have life thro his name*, Jo. 20. 31. The Epistles were not addrest peculiarly to the Bishops and Deacons, *but all the holy brethren, to the Churches of God that are sanctified in Jesus Christ, and to all those that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 1. 1. Galat. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 1. Col. 4. 16. 1 Thes. 5. 27. Phil. 1. 1. Jam. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 1. 2 Pet. 1. 1. Revel. 1. 4. Or if by chance some one or two of the Epistles were addrest to an Ecclesiastic person, as those to *Timothy* and *Titus*; their purport plainly refers to the community of Christians, and the *depositum* committed to their trust; 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. And Saint *John* on the other side directs his Epistles to those who were plainly secular; to fathers, young men and little children: and a Lady and her children, Epist. 1. ch. 2. 12, 13, 14. and Epist. 2. 1. 1.

These are not a bare depositum, *but the Testament of our Savior.*

6. But besides the interest which every Christian has in the custody of the Scripture upon the account of its being a *depositum* intrusted to him, he has also another no less forcible; that 'tis the Testament of his Savior, by which he becomes a Son of God, *no more a servant but a Son*; *and if he be a Son*, it is the Apostles inference, that he is *then an heir, an heir of God thro Christ*, Gal. 4. 7. Now as he who is heir to an estate, is also to the deeds and conveiance thereof; which without injury cannot be detain'd, or if they be, there is a remedy at Law for the recovery of them; so it fares in our Christian inheritance: every believer by the privilege of faith, is made a son of *Abraham*, and an heir of the promises made unto the fathers, whereby he has an hereditary interest in the Old Testament; and also by the privilege of the same Faith he has a firm right to the *purchast possession*, Eph. 1. 14. and the charter thereof, the New. Therefore the detention of the Scriptures, which are made up of these two

parts,

parts, is a manifest injustice, and sacrilegious invasion of right, which the person wrong'd is impower'd, nay, is strictly oblig'd by all lawful means to vindicate.

The detention of these from the persons concern'd is sacrilegious invasion.

7. Which invasion of right will appear more flagrant when the nature and importance of it is consider'd; which relating to mens spiritual interest, renders the violation infinitly more injurious then it could be in any secular. I might mention several detriments consequent to this detention of Scripture, even as many as there are benefits appendant to the free use of it; but there is one of so fundamental and comprehensive a nature, that I need name no more; and that is, that it delivers men up to any delusion their teachers shall impose upon them, by depriving them of means of detecting them. Where there is no standard or measures, 'tis easy for men to falsify both; and no less easy is it to adulterate doctrins, where no recourse can be had to the primary rule. Now that there is a possibility that false teachers may arise, we have all assurance; nay we have the word of Christ, and his Apostles that it should be so: and all Ecclesiastic Story to attest it has bin so. And if in the first and purest times (those Ages of more immediat illumination) the *God of this world* found instruments whereby to *blind mens minds*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. it cannot be suppos'd impossible or improbable he should do so now.

The magisterial detention of the scriptures, falls under our Saviors doom of taking away the key of knowledge.

8. But to leave generals, and to speak to the case of that Church which magisterially prohibits Scripture to the vulgar: she manifestly stands liable to that charge of our Savior, Luk. 11. 52. *Ye have taken away the key of knowledge:* and by allowing the common people no more Scripture then what she affords them in their Sermons and private Manuals, keeps it in her power to impose on them what she pleases. For 'tis sure those portions she selects for them, shall be none of those which clash with the doctrins she recommends: and when ever she will use this power to the corrupting their faith, or worship (yea, or their manners either) they must bruitishly submit to it, because they cannot bring her dictates to the test.

The plea of infallibility is no justification.

9. But 'twill be said, this danger she wards by her doctrin of infallibility: that is, she enervates a probable supposition attested by event, by an impossible one confuted by event. For 'tis certain that all particular Churches may err; and tho the consciousness of that, forces the Roman Church upon the absurd pretence of universality, to assert her infallibility; yet alas *Tyber* may as well call it self the Ocean, or *Italy* the world, as the Roman Church may name it self the universal; whilst 'tis so apparent that far the less part of Christians are under her communion. And if she be but a particular Church, she has no immunity from errors, nor those under her from having those errors (how pernitious soever) impos'd upon them. As to her having actually err'd, and in diverse particulars, the proof of that has been the work of so many Volumes, that 'twould be impertinent here to undertake it: I shall only instance in that of Image-worship, a practice perfectly irreconcilable with the second Commandment; and doubtless, clearly discern'd by her to be so: upon which account it is, that tho by Translations and Paraphrases she wrests and moulds other Texts to comply with her doctrins, yet she dares not trust to those arts for this: but takes a more compendious course, and expunges the Commandment; as is evident in her Catechisms and other Manuals. Now a Church that can thus sacrilegiously purloin one Commandment (and such a one as God has own'd himself the most jealously concern'd in) and to delude her children split another to make up the

number

number, may as her needs require, substract and divide what others she please: and then whilst all resort to Scripture is obstructed; how fatal a hazard must those poor souls run, who are oblig'd to follow these blind, or rather these winking guides into the ditch?

The dangers of allowing the Scripture are no sufficient excuse.

10. But all these criminations she retorts by objecting the dangers of allowing the Scriptures to the vulgar, which she accuses as the spring of all Sects, Schisms, and Heresies. To which I answer first, that supposing this were true, 'twas certainly foreseen by God, who notwithstanding laid no restraint; probably as fore-seeing, that the dangers of implicit faith (to which such a restraint must subject men) would be far greater: and if God saw fit to indulge the liberty, those that shall oppose it, must certainly think they do not only partake, but have transplanted infallibility from God to themselves.

'Tis not true that schisms and heresies are owing to the reading the scripture.

11. But secondly, 'tis not generally true, that Sects, Schisms and Heresies are owing to this liberty: all Ecclesiastical Story shews us that they were not the illiterat Lay-men, but the learned Clerks who were usually the broachers of Heresies. And indeed many of them were so subtil and aerial, as could never have bin forg'd in grosser brains; but were founded not on Scripture merely mistaken, but rackt and distorted with nice criticisms, and quirks of Logic, as several of the Ancients complain: some again sprang from that ambition of attaining, or impatience of missing Ecclesiastical dignities: which appropriates them to the Clergy. So that if the abuse infer a forfeiture of the use, the Learned have of all others the least title to the Scriptures; and perhaps those who now ingross them, the least title of all the Learned.

Church story enforms us heresies rose from Ecclesiastics and men of speculation.

12. On the other side, Church story indeed mentions som Lay-propugners of Heresies; but those for the most part were either so gross and bestial, as disparag'd and confuted themselves and Authors, and rose rather from the bruitish inclination of the men, then from their mistakes of Scripture: or else they were by the immediat infusion of the devil, who backt his heretical suggestions with sorceries and lying wonders, as in *Simon Magus, Menander, &c.* And for later times, tho somtimes it happens among the vulgar a few pragmatic spirits, that love to tamper with the obscurest Texts, and will undertake to expound before they understand; yet that is not their common temper: the generality are rather in the other extreme, stupid and unobservant even of the plainest doctrins. And if to this be objected the multitude of Quakers and Fanatics, who generally are of the ignorant sort; I answer, that 'tis manifest the first propugners of those tenets in *Germany* were not seduc'd into them by mistakes of Scripture, but industriously form'd them, at once to disguise and promote their villainous designs of sedition and rapine: and as for those amongst us, it is not at all certain that their first errors were their own productions: there are vehement presumtions that the seeds were sown by greater Artificers; whose first business was to unhinge them from the Church, and then to fill their heads with strange Chimera's of their privileges and perfections; and by that intoxication of spiritual pride, dispose them for all delusions: and thereby render them, like *Samsons* Foxes, fit instruments to set all in combustion.

It no way appears that the reading of Scripture was accessary to the rise or growth of heresies.

13. But admit this were but a conjecture, and that they were the sole Authors of their own frenzy; how appears it that the liberty of reading the Scripture was the cause of it? Had these men bin of the Romish communion, and so bin interdicted privat reading, yet some broken parts of Scripture would have been in Sermons and Books of devotion communicated

cated to them; had it not been as possible for them to have wrested what they heard as what they read? In one respect it seems rather more likely: for in those loose and incidental quotations the connexion is sometimes not so discernable: and many Texts there are whose sense is so interwoven with the context, that without consulting that, there may be very pernicious mistakes: on which account it is probably more safe that the Auditor should have Bibles to consult. So that this restraint of Scripture is a very fallible expedient of the infallible Church. And indeed themselves have in event found it so; for if it were so soveraign a prophylactic against error, how comes it to pass that so many of their members that were under that discipline have revolted from them into that which they call heresy? If they say, the defection was made by some of the Learned to whom the Scripture was allow'd; why do they not (according to their way of arguing) take it from them also upon that experiment of its mischief, and confine it only to the infallible chair? but if they own them to have bin unlearn'd (as probably the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, *&c.* were) they may see how insignificant a guard this restraint is against error: and learn how little is got by that policy which controles the divine Wisdom.

14. Nor can they take shelter in the example of the primitive Christians: for they in the constant use of the holy Scriptures yielded not unto the Jews. Whereas the Jews had the Scriptures read publicly to them every Sabbath day; which *Josephus* against *Appion* thus expresses: *Moses propounded to the Jews the most excellent and necessary learning of the Laws not by hearing it once or twice, but every seventh day laying aside their works, he commanded them to assemble for the hearing of the Law, and throughly and exactly to learn it.* Parallel to this was the practice of the primitive Church, perform'd by the Lector or Reader, of which *Justin Martyr* in his 2. *Apol.* gives this account. *On the day called Sunday, all that abide in towns or the countries about, meet in one place, and the writings of the Apostles and Prophets are read, so far as there is place.* So *Tertullian* in his *Apol.* describing the offices in the public Assemblies: *We feed our faith with the sacred Words, we raise our hopes, and establish our alliance.*

The primitive Church did not think fit to withhold the scripture.

15. And as the Jews thought it indecent for persons professing piety, to let three days pass without the offices thereof in the congregation; and therefore met in their Synagogues upon every Tuesday and Thursday in the week, and there perform'd the duties of fasting, praier, and hearing the holy Scriptures; concerning which is the boast of the Pharisee, *Luke* 18. 12. in conformity hereto the Christians also, their Sabbath being brought forward from the Saturday to the day following; that the like number of daies might not pass them without performing the aforesaid duties in the congregation; met together on the Wednesdaies and Fridaies, which were the daies of Station, so frequently mention'd in *Tertullian*, and others, the first writers of the Church. *Tertullian* expresly saies, that the Christians dedicated to the offices of Piety, *the fourth and sixth day of the week*: and *Clemens Alex.* saies of the Christians, that *they understood the secret reasons of their weekly fasts, to wit, those of the fourth day of the week, and that of the preparation before the Sabbath; commonly call'd Wednesday and Friday.* Where, by the way, we may take notice what ground there is for the observation of the Wednesday and Friday in our Church, and the Litanies then appointed, so much neglected in this profligate Age.

The Jews never suffered three daies to pass without the public reading of the Law, which was imitated by the Christians

They both privately instructed their children in it.

16. But secondly, as the Jews were diligent in the privat reading of the Scripture; being taught it from their infancy: which custom Saint *Paul* refers to 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. whereof *Josephus* against *Appion* saies, *That if a man ask any Jew concerning the Laws, he will tell every thing readier then his name: for learning them from the first time they have sense of any thing, they retain them imprinted in their minds.* So were the first Christians equally industrious in improving their knowledg of divine Truth. *The whole life of a Christian,* saies *Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 7. is a holy solemnity, there his sacrifices are praiers and praises; before every meal he has the readings of the holy scriptures; and Psalms and Hymns at the time of his meals.* Which *Tertullian* also describes in his Apol. and Saint *Cyprian* in the end of the Epist. to *Donatus.*

A proof hereof are the early and numerous versions of the scripture.

17. And this is farther evidenc'd by the early and numerous versions of the Scriptures into all vulgar Languages; concerning which *Theodoret* speaks in his Book of the Cure of the Affections of the Greeks, Serm. 5. *We Christians* (saies he) *are enabled to shew the power of Apostolic and Prophetic doctrins, which have fill'd all Countries under heaven. For that which was formerly utter'd in Hebrew, is not only translated into the Language of the Grecians, but also the Romans, Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Armenians, Scythians, Samaritans; and in a word to all the Languages that are us'd by any Nation.* The same is said by saint *Chrysostom* in his first Homily upon Saint *John.*

Which was don by the doctors of the church.

18. Nor was this don by the blind zeal of inconsiderable men, but the most eminent Doctors of the Church were concern'd herein: such as *Origen,* who with infinit labor contriv'd the Hexapla. Saint *Chrysostom,* who translated the New Testament, Psalms, and som part of the Old Testament into the Armenian Tongue, as witnesses *Geor. Alex.* in the life of *Chrysost.* So *Ulphilas* the first Bishop of the Goths translated the holy Scripture into the Gothic; as *Socrat. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. cap.* 33. and others testify. Saint *Jerom,* who translated them not only into Latin from the Hebrew, the Old Italic version having bin from the Greek; but also into his native vulgar Dalmatic: which he saies himself in his Epistle to *Sophronius.*

The peoples having the scripture for their private use, appears from the heathens extorting of them by persecution.

19. But the peoples having them for their privat and constant use, appears farther by the Heathens making the extorting of them a part of their persecution: and when divers did faint in that trial, and basely surrender'd them, we find the Church level'd her severity only against the offending persons, did not (according to the Romish equity) punish the innocent, by depriving them of that sacred Book, because the others had so unworthily prostituted it (tho the prevention of such a profanation for the future had been as fair a plea for it as the Romanists do now make:) but on the contrary the primitive Fathers are frequent, nay indeed importunat in their exhortations to the privat study of holy Scripture, which they recommend to Christians of all Ranks, Ages, and Sexes.

The suffrage of Clem. Alex.

20. As an instance hereof let us hear *Clemens* of *Alexand.* in his Exhort. *The Word,* saies he, *is not hid from any, it is a common light that shineth to all men; there is no obscurity in it; hear it you that be far off, and hear it you that are nigh.*

Of St. Jerom.

21. To this purpose St. *Jerom* speaks in his Epistle to *Leta,* whom he directs in the education of her young daughter, and advises, *that instead of gems and silk, she be enamour'd with the holy Scripture; wherein not gold, or skins, or Babylonian embroideries, but a correct and beautiful variety producing faith, will recommend its self. Let her first learn the Psalter, and be entertain'd with those songs; then be instructed unto life by the Proverbs of* Solomon: *let her learn from* Ecclesiastes *to despise worldly things; transcribe from* Job *the practice of patience and vertue: let her pass then to the Gospels, and never let them*

them be out of her hands: and then imbibe with all the faculties of the mind, the Acts of the Apostles, and Epistles. When she has enrich'd the store-house of her breast with these tresures, let her learn the Prophets, the Heptateuch, or books of Moses, Joshua *and* Judges, *the books of* Kings *and* Chronicles, *the volumes of* Ezra *and* Esther; *and lastly the* Canticles. And indeed this Father is so concern'd to have the unletter'd female sex skilful in the Scriptures, that tho he sharply rebukes their pride and over-wening; he not only frequently resolves their doubts concerning difficult places in the said Scriptures, but dedicates several of his Commentaries to them.

22. The same is to be said of Saint *Austin*, who in his Epistles to unletter'd Laics, encourages their enquiries concerning the Scripture, assuring *Volusianus* Ep. 3. *that it speaks those things that are plain to the heart of the learned and unlearned, as a familiar friend; in the mysterious, mounts not up into high phrases which might deter a slow and unlearned mind, (as the poor are in their addresses to the rich;) but invites all with lowly speech, feeding with manifest truth, and exercising with secret.* And *Ep.* 1. 21. tells the devout *Proba*, that *in this world, where we are absent from the Lord, and walk by faith and not by sight, the soul is to think it self desolate, and never cease from praier, and the words of divine and holy Scripture*, &c. *of St. Austin.*

23. Saint *Chrysostom* in his third Homily of *Lazarus* thus addresses himself to *married persons, housholders, and people ingag'd in trades and secular professions*; telling them, *that the reading of the Scripture is a great defensative against sin; and on the other side, the ignorance thereof is a deep and headlong precipice; that not to know the Law of God, is the utter loss of salvation; that this has caus'd heresies, and corruption of life, and has confounded the order of things: for it cannot be by any means, that his labor should be fruitless, who emploies himself in a daily and attentive reading of the Scripture.* *of St. Chrysostome.*

24. *I am not*, saies the same St. *Chrys. Hom.* 9. *on Colos.* 3. *a Monk, I have wife and children, and the cares of a family. But 'tis a destructive opinion, that the reading of the scripture pertains only to those who have addicted themselves to a monastic life; when the reading of Scripture is much more necessary for secular persons: for they who converse abroad, and receive frequent wounds, are in greatest need of remedies and preservatives.* So *Hom.* 2. *on Mat. Hearken all you that are secular, how you ought to order your wives and children; and how you are particularly enjoyn'd to read the scriptures, and that not perfunctorily or by chance, but very diligently.* *Farther testimonies from St. Chrysost.*

25. Likewise *Hom.* 3. *on Laz. What saiest thou, O man? it is not thy business to turn over the scripture, being distracted by innumerable cares; no, thou hast therefore the greater obligation: others do not so much stand in need of the scripture, as they who are conversant in much business.* Farther *Hom.* 8. on *Heb.* 5. *I beseech you neglect not the reading of the scriptures; but whether we comprehend the meaning of what is spoken or not, let us alwaies be conversant in them: for daily meditation strengthens the memory; and it frequently happens, that what you now cannot find out, if you attemt it again, you will the next day discover: for God of his goodness will enlighten the mind.* It were endless to transcribe all the Exhortations of the ancient Doctors and Fathers of the Church; they not only permitted, but earnestly prest upon all Christians, whatever their estate or condition were, the constant reading of the holy Scripture. Nor indeed was their restraint ever heard of till the Church of *Rome* had espous'd such doctrins as would not bear the test of Scripture: and then as those who deal in false wares are us'd to do, they found it necessary to proportion their lights accordingly. *Farther testimonies from St. Chrysost.*

The confession of Pet. Sutor. 26. This *Peter Sutor* in his second Book chap. 22. of the Translation of the Scripture honestly confesses, saying, *That whereas many things are enjoin'd which are not expresly in Scripture, the unlearned observing this, will be apt to murmur and complain that so heavy burthens are laid upon them, and their Christian liberty infring'd. They will easily be with-drawn from observing the Constitutions of the Church, when they find that they are not contain'd in the Law of Christ.* And that this was not a frivolous suggestion, the desperat attemt of the Romanists above mention'd, in leaving out the second Commandment in their Primers and Catechisms which they communicate to the people, may pass for an irrefragable evidence; for what Lay-man would not be shockt, to find Almighty God command, *not to make any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; that no one should bow down to them, nor worship them*: when he sees the contrary is practic'd and commanded by the Church.

The negligent who detain the scriptures from themselves are as criminal, as they who force them from their people. 27. But would God none but the Romanist were impeachable of this detention of Scripture: there are too many among us that are thus false and envious to themselves: and what the former do upon policy and pretence of reverence, those do upon mere oscitancy and avow'd profaness; which are much worse inducements. And for such as these to declaim against detention of the Scripture, is like the law-suits of those who contend only about such little punctilio's as themselves design no advantage from, but only the worsting their Adversaries: and it would be much safer for them to lie under the interdict of others, then thus to restrain themselves: even as much as the errors of obedience are more excusable, then those of contemt and profaness.

Such are Diocletians to themselves. 28. And here I would have it seriously consider'd that the Edict of *Diocletian* for the demolishing the Christian Churches and the burning their Bibles, became the character and particular aggravation of his most bloudy persecution. Now should Almighty God call us to the like trial, should Antichristian violence, whether heathen or other, take from us our Churches and our Bibles; what comfort could we have in that calamity, if our contemt of those blessings drove them from us; nay, prevented persecution, and bereft us of them even whilst we had them in our power? He who neglects to make his constant resort unto the Church, which by Gods mercy now stands open; or to read diligently the holy Scriptures, which by the same divine Goodness are free for him to use, is his own *Diocletian*; and without the terrors of death or torments, has renounc'd, if not the Faith, the great instruments of its conveiance, and pledg of God Almighties presence among the sons of men.

Whether we will hear or forbear, we shall be judg'd by the scripture. 29. But what if men either upon the one motive or the other, will not read; yet the Scriptures continue still most worthy to be read: they retain still their propriety for all those excellent ends to which God design'd them: and as the Prophet tells the Jews, Ezek. 2. 5. *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, they shall know there has bin a prophet among them*; so whether we will take the benefit or no, we shall one day find that the holy Scriptures would have made us *wise unto salvation.* If thro our fault alone they fail to do so, they will one day assume a less grateful office; and from guides and assistants, become accusers and witnesses against us.

SECT.

Sect. V.

The Scripture has great propriety and fitneſs towards the attainment of its excellent end.

WE are now in the next place to conſider how exactly the holy Scriptures are adapted to thoſe great ends to which they are directed: how ſufficient they are for that important negotiation on which they are ſent: and that we ſhall certainly find them, if we look on them either intrinſecally, or circumſtantially. For the firſt of theſe notions we need only to reflect on the third Part of this diſcourſe, where the Scripture in reſpect of the ſubject Matter is evinc'd to be a ſyſtem of the moſt excellent Laws, backt with the moſt tranſcendent rewards and puniſhments; and the certainty of thoſe confirm'd by ſuch pregnant inſtances of Gods mercies and vengeance in this world, as are the ſureſt gages and earneſts of what we are bid to expect in another. *The aptitude of the Scripture to attain its end.*

2. Now what method imaginable can there be uſed to rational creatures of more force and energy? Nay it ſeems to deſcend even to our paſſions and accommodates it ſelf to our ſeveral inclinations. And ſeeing how few Proſelytes there are to bare and naked vertue, and how many to intereſt and advantage; God cloſes with them upon their own terms, and do's not ſo much enjoin as buy thoſe little ſervices he asks from us. *It cloſes with our intereſts and paſſions.*

3. But becauſe ſom mens natures are ſo diſingenuous as to hate to be oblig'd no leſs then to be reform'd, the Scripture has goads and ſcourges to drive ſuch beaſts as will not be led; terrors and threatnings, and thoſe of moſt formidable ſorts, to affright thoſe who will not be allur'd. Nay leſt incredulous men ſhould queſtion the reality of future rewards or puniſhments, the Scripture gives as ſenſible evidence of them as we are capable of receiving in this world; by regiſtring ſuch ſignal protections and judgments proportion'd to vertue and vice, as ſufficiently atteſts the Pſalmiſts Axiom: *Doubtleſs there is a God that judgeth the earth*, Pſal. 58. 11. and leaves nothing to the impenitent ſinner, but a *fearful expectation of that fiery indignation* threatned hereafter, *Heb.* 10. 27. *And only affrights when we will not be allur'd.*

4. And now methinks the Scripture ſeems to be that *net* our Savior ſpeaks of, *that caught of every ſort*, Matt. 13.47. it is of ſo vaſt a compaſs that it muſt, one would think, fetch in all kind of tempers: and ſure had we not mixt natures with fiends, contracted ſom of their malice and obſtinacy, mere human pravity could not hold out. *So juſtifies our Saviors deſcription of being a net, that caught of every ſort.*

5. And as the holy Scripture is thus fitly proportion'd to its end in reſpect of the ſubject matter, ſo is it alſo in reference to its circumſtances, which all conſpire to render it *the power of God unto ſalvation*, Rom. 1. 16. In the firſt rank of thoſe we muſt place its Divine original, which ſtamps it with an uncontroulable autority; and is an infallible ſecurity that the matter of it is perfectly true: ſince it proceeds from that eſſential verity which cannot abuſe us with fraudulent promiſes or threatnings: and from that infinite power that cannot be impeded in the execution of what he purpoſes. *The authority where with the Scripture ſpeaks gives great advantage to the attaining its end.*

6. Yet to render this circumſtance efficacious there needs another; to wit, that its being the word of God be ſufficiently teſtifi'd to us: and we have in the fore-going diſcourſe evinced it to be ſo; and that in the utmoſt degree that a matter of that kind is capable of, beyond which no ſober *Which is ſufficiently clear'd and promulgated.*

man will require evidence in any thing. And certainly these two circumstances thus united, have a mighty force to impress the dictats of Scripture on us. And we must rebel against God and our own convictions too, to hold out against it.

It gives a history of all created beings from their first original.

7. A third circumstance relates to the frame and composure of this Divine Book, both as to method, and stile: concerning which I have already made som reflexions. But now that I may speak more distinctly, I observe it takes its rise from the first point of time wherein 'twas possible for mankind to be concern'd; and so gradually proceeds to its fall and renovation: shews us first our need of a Redeemer, and then points us out who it is by types and promises in the Old Testament, and by way of history and completion in the New. In the former it acquaints us with that pedagogy of the Law which God design'd as our *Schole-master to bring us to Christ*, Gal. 3. 25. and in the Gospel shews us yet a more excellent way; presents us with those more sublime elevated doctrins, which Christ came down from heaven to revele.

The stile is frequently full of majesty.

8. As for the stile, that is full of grateful variety, somtimes high and majestic, as becomes that *high and holy one that inhabiteth eternity*, Isaiah 75. 15. and somtimes so humble and after the manner of men, as agrees to the other part of his Character, *his dwelling is with him that is of an humble spirit*, Isaiah 57. 15. I know profane wits are apt to brand this as an unevenness of stile: but they may as well accuse the various notes of Music as destructive to harmony, or blame an Orator for being able to tune his tongue to the most different strains.

Suited to its subject; is plain in duty, and involv'd in mysteries.

9. Another excellency of the stile, is its propriety to the several subjects it treats of. When it speaks of such things as God would not have men pry into, it wraps them up in clouds and thick darkness; by that means to deter inquisitive man (as he did at *Sinai*) from breaking into the mount, *Exod.* 20. And that he gives any intimation at all of such, seems design'd only to give us a just estimate how shallow our comprehensions are; and excite us to adore and admire that Abyss of Divine Wisdom which we can never fathom.

Things of a middle nature, are made the prize of industry.

10. Things of a middle nature, which may be useful to som, but are not indispensibly necessary to all, the Scripture leaves more accessible; yet not so obvious as to be within every mans reach: but makes them only the prize of industry, praier, and humble endevors. And it is no small benefit, that those who covet the knowledg of Divine Truth, are by it engag'd to take these vertues in the way. Besides there is so much time requir'd to that study, as renders it inconsistent with those secular businesses wherein the generality of men are immerst: and consequently 'tis necessary that those who addict themselves to the one, have competent vacancy from the other: And in this it hath a visible use by being very contributive to the maintaining that spiritual subordination of the people to the Pastors; which God has establish'd. *Miriam* and *Corahs* Partisans are a pregnant instance how much the opinion of equal knowledg unfits for subjection: and we see by sad experience how much the bare pretence of it has disturb'd the Church, and made those turn preachers who never were understanding hearers.

Difficult places, are interpreted by plainer.

11. But besides these more abstruse, there are easier truths in which every man is concern'd; the explicit knowledg whereof is necessary to all: I mean the Divine Rules for saving Faith and Manners. And in those the Scripture stile is as plain as is possible: condescends to the apprehensions of the rudest capacities: so that none that can read the Scripture but will

there

there find the way to bliſs evidently chalk'd out to him. That I may uſe the words of Saint *Gregory*, *the Lamb may wade in thoſe waters of life, as well as the Elephant may ſwim. The Holy Ghoſt*, as Saint *Auguſtin* tell us, lib. 2. of Chriſtian doctrin, chap. 6. *has made in the plainer places of Scripture magnificent and healthful proviſion for our hunger; and in the obſcure, againſt ſatiety. For there are ſcarce any things drawn from obſcure places, which in others are not ſpoken moſt plainly.* And he farther adds, *that if any thing happen to be no where explain'd, every man may there abound in his own ſenſe.*

12. So again, in the ſame Book, chap. 9. he ſaies, *that all thoſe things which concern Faith and Manners, are plainly to be met with in the Scripture:* and Saint *Jerom* in his Comment on *Iſ.* 19. tells us, *that 'tis the cuſtom of the Scripture to cloſe obſcure ſayings with thoſe that are eaſy; and what was firſt expreſt darkly, to propoſe in evident words:* which very thing is ſaid likewiſe by Saint *Chryſoſtom*, *Hom.* 9. on 2 *Cor.* 4. 11. who in his firſt Homily on Saint *Matt.* farther declares, *that the Scriptures are eaſy to be underſtood, and expos'd to vulgar capacities.*

St. Auſtin and St. Jerom and St. Chryſoſtome atteſt the eaſineſs of the Scripture.

13. He ſaies again, *Hom.* upon *Iſaiah*, *that the Scriptures are not mettals that require the help of Miners, but afford a treſure eaſily to be had to them that ſeek the riches contain'd in them. It is enough only to ſtoop down, and look upon them, and depart repleniſh'd with wealth; it is enough only to open them, and behold the ſplendor of thoſe Gems.* Again, *Hom.* 3. on the ſecond Ep. to the *Theſſ.* 2. *All things are evident and ſtrait, which are in the holy Scripture, whatever is neceſſary is manifeſt.* So alſo *Hom.* 3. on *Gen.* 14. *It cannot be that he who is ſtudious in the holy Scripture ſhould be rejected: for tho the inſtruction of men be wanting, the Lord from above will inlighten our minds, ſhine in upon our reaſon, revele what is ſecret, and teach what we do not know.* So *Hom.* 1. on *John* 11. *Almighty God involves his doctrin with no miſts and darkneſs, as did the Philoſophers: his doctrin is brighter then the Sun-beams, and more illuſtrious; and therefore every where diffus'd.* And *Hom.* 6. on *John* 11. *His doctrin is ſo facile, that not only the wiſe, but even women, and youths muſt comprehend it. Hom.* 13. on *Gen.* 2. *Let us go to the Scripture as our Mark, which is its own interpreter.* And ſoon after he ſaies, that *the Scripture interprets it ſelf, and ſuffers not its Auditor to err.* To the ſame purpoſe ſaies *Cyril* in his third Book againſt *Julian. In the Scripture nothing is difficult to them, who are converſant in them as they ought to be.*

Eſpecially in things neceſſary.

14. It is therefore a groundleſs cavil which men make at the obſcurity of the Scripture; ſince it is not obſcure in thoſe things wherein 'tis our common intereſt it ſhould be plain: which ſufficiently juſtifies its propriety to that great end of *making us wiſe unto ſalvation.* And for thoſe things which ſeem leſs intelligible to us, many of them become ſo, not by the innate obſcurity of the Text, but by extrinſic circumſtances (of which perhaps the over-buſy tampering of Paraphraſts, pleaſed with new notions of their own, may be reckon'd for one.) But this ſubject the Reader may find ſo well purſued in Mr. *Boyls* Tract concerning the ſtile of Scripture, that I ſhall be kindeſt both to him and it to refer him thither; as alſo for anſwer to thoſe other querulous objections which men galled with the ſenſe of the Scripture, have made to its ſtile.

'Tis a groundleſs cavil that men make to the obſcurity of Scripture, ſince whatever is difficult is not neceſſary.

15. A third circumſtance in which the Scripture is fitted to attain its end, is its being committed to Writing, as that is diſtinguiſh'd from Oral delivery. It is moſt true, the word of God is of equal autority and efficacy which way ſoever it be deliver'd. The Sermons of the Apoſtles were every jot as Divine and powerful out of their mouths, as they are now in their

A farther advantage for the attainment of the end deſign'd in the Scripture is its being committed to writing.

their story. All the advantage therefore that the writen Word can pretend to, is in order to its perpetuity, as it is a securer way of derivation to posterity, then that of oral Tradition. To evince that it is so, I shall first weigh the rational probabilities on either side. Secondly, I shall consider to which God himself appears in Scripture to give the deference.

Especially being universally dispersst.

16. For the first of these, I shall propose this consideration, which I had occasion to intimate before, that the Bible being writ for the universal use of the faithful, 'twas as universally dispersst amongst them: The Jews had the Law not only in their Synagogues, but in their privat houses, and as soon as the Evangelical Books were writ, they were scatter'd into all places where the Christian Faith had obtain'd. Now when there was such a vast multitude of copies, and those so revered by the possessors, that they thought it the highest pitch of sacrilege to expose them, it must surely be next to impossible, entirely to suppress that Book. Besides, it could never be attemted but by som eminent violence, as it was by the heathen Persecutors; which (according to the common effect of opposition) serv'd to enhance the Christians value of the Bible; and consequently when the storm was past, to excite their diligence for recruiting the number. So that, unless in after Ages, all the Christians in the world should at once make a voluntary defection, and conspire to eradicate their Religion, the Scriptures could not be utterly extinguish'd.

Whereby as it was secur'd from a total suppression, so also from falsification.

17. And that which secures it from total suppression, do's in a great degree do so from corruption and falsification. For whilst so many genuine copies are extant in all parts of the world, to be appeal'd to, it would be a very difficult matter to impose a spurious one; especially if the change were so material as to awaken mens jealousies. And it must be only in a place and age of gross ignorance, that any can be daring enough to attemt it. And if it should happen to succeed in such a particular Church; yet what is that to the universal? And to think to have the forgery admitted there, is (as a learned man saies) like attemting to poison the sea.

Tradition is much more liable to hazards.

18. On the other side, oral Tradition seems more liable to hazards, error may there insinuate it self much more insensibly. And tho there be no universal conspiracy to admit it at first; yet like a small eruption of waters, it widens its own passage, till it cause an inundation. There is no impression so deep, but time and intervening accidents may wear out of mens minds; especially where the notions are many and are founded not in nature, but positive institution, as a great part of Christian Religion is. And when we consider the various tempers of men, 'twill not be strange that succeeding Ages will not alwaies be determin'd by the Traditions of the former. Som are pragmatic, and think themselves fitter to prescribe to the belief of their posterity, then to follow that of their Ancestors: som have interests and designs which will be better serv'd by new Tenets: and som are ignorant and mistaking, and may unawares corrupt the doctrin they should barely deliver: and of this last sort we may gues there may be many, since it falls commonly to the mothers lot to imbue children with the first rudiments.

We daily see how a true and probable story after a little telling emproves into an improbable lie.

19. Now in all these cases how possible is it that primitive Tradition may be either lost or adulterated? and consequently, and in proportion to that possibility, our confidence of it must be stagger'd. I am sure according to the common estimate in seculars it must be so. For I appeal to any man whether he be not apter to credit a relation which comes from an eie-witness then at the third or fourth, much more at the hundredth rebound: (as in this case.) And daily experience tells us; that a true and probable

probable ſtory by paſſing thro many hands, often grows to an improbable lie. This man thinks he could add one becoming circumſtance, that man another: and whilſt moſt men take the liberty to do ſo, the relation grows as monſtrous as ſuch a heap of incoherent fancies can make it.

The weighty concern of religion cannot remedy this.

20. If to this it be ſaid, that this happens only in trivial ſecular matters, but that in the weighty concern of Religion mankind is certainly more ſerious and ſincere: I anſwer that 'tis very improbable that they are; ſince 'tis obvious in the common practice of the world, that the intereſts of Religion are poſtpon'd to every little worldly concern. And therefore when a temporal advantage requires the bending and warping of Religion, there never be wanting ſom that will attemt it.

We are naturally enclin'd to will-worſhip.

21. Beſides, there is ſtill left in human nature ſo much of the venom of the Serpents firſt temtation, that tho men cannot be as God, yet they love to be preſcribing to him, and to be their own Aſſeſſors as to that worſhip and homage they are to pay him.

And the devil is concern'd to help this temper forward and corrupt religion.

22. But above all 'tis conſiderable that in this caſe Sathan has a more peculiar concern, and can ſerve himſelf more by a falſification here then in temporal affairs. For if he can but corrupt Religion, it ceaſes to be his enemy, and becomes one of his moſt uſeful engins, as ſufficiently ap-pear'd in the rites of the heathen worſhip. We have therefore no cauſe to think this an exemt caſe; but to preſume it may be influenc'd by the ſame pravity of human nature, which prevailes in others; and conſequently are oblig'd to bleſs God that he has not left our ſpiritual concerns to ſuch hazards, but has lodg'd them in a more ſecure repoſitory, the writen Word.

It may be objected, that by decrying tradition we invalidate the authority of the Scripture.

23. But I fore-ſee 'twill be objected, that whilſt I thus diſparage Tradition, I do vertually invalidate the Scripture it ſelf, which comes to us upon its credit. To this I anſwer firſt that ſince God has with-drawn immediate revelation from the world, Tradition is the only means to convey to us the firſt notice that this Book is the word of God: and it being the only means he affords, we have all reaſon to depend on his goodneſs, that he will not ſuffer that to be evacuated to us: and that how liable ſoever Tradition may be to err, yet that ſhall not actually err in this particular.

The tradition which concerns the author or credit of a book is a ſhort propoſition which is not apt to be corrupted.

24. But in the ſecond place; This Tradition ſeems not ſo liable to falſification as others: It is ſo very ſhort and ſimple a propoſition; ſuch and ſuch writings are the word of God, that there is no great room for Sophiſtry or miſtake to pervert the ſenſe; the only poſſible deception muſt be to change the ſubject, and obtrude ſuppoſititious writings in room of the true, under the title of the word of God. But this has already appear'd to be unpracticable, becauſe of the multitude of copies which were diſperſt in the world; by which ſuch an attemt would ſoon have bin detected. There appears therefore more reaſon as well as more neceſſity, to rely upon Tradition in this, then in moſt other particulars.

The judgment of mankind gives the preference to writing againſt tradition. Our laws and Evidences of our Eſtates, we do not truſt to memory.

25. Neither yet do I ſo far decry oral Tradition in any, as to conclude it impoſſible it ſhould derive any truth to poſterity; I only look on it as more caſual; and conſequently a leſs fit conveiance of the moſt important and neceſſary verities then the writen Word: In which I conceive my ſelf juſtifi'd by the common ſenſe of mankind; who uſe to commit thoſe things to writing, which they are moſt ſolicitous to derive to poſterity. Do's any Nation truſt their fundamental Laws only to the memory of the preſent Age, and take no other courſe to tranſmit them to the future? Do's any man purchaſe an eſtate, and leave no way for his children to lay claim to it, but the Tradition the preſent witneſſes ſhall leave of it? Nay

do's any considering man ordinarily make any important pact or bargain (tho without relation to posterity) without putting the Articles in writing? And whence is all this caution but from an universal consent that writing is the surest way of transmitting?

But herein we have the suffrage of God himself.

26. But we have yet a higher appeal in this matter then to the suffrage of men: God himself seems to have determin'd it; And what his decision is, 'tis our next business to inquire.

He having chose it.

27. And first he has given the most real and comprehensive attestation to this way of writing, by having himself chose it. For he is too wise to be mistaken in his estimate of better and worse, and too kind to chuse the worst for us: and yet he has chosen to communicate himself to the latter Ages of the world by writing; and has summ'd up all the Eternal concerns of mankind in the sacred Scriptures, and left those sacred Records by which we are to be both inform'd and govern'd; which if oral Tradition would infallibly have don, had bin utterly needless: and God sure is not so prodigal of his Spirit, as to inspire the Authors of Scripture to write that, whose use was superseded by a former more certain expedient.

Himself wrote the decalogue.

28. Nay, under the Mosaic œconomy, when he made use of other waies of reveling himself, yet to perpetuate the memory even of those Revelations, he chose to have them writen. At the delivery of the Law, God spake then *viva voce*, and with that pomp of dreadful solemnity, as certainly was apt to make the deepest impressions; yet God fore-saw that thro every succeeding Age that stamp would grow more dim, and in a long revolution might at last be extinct. And therefore how warm soever the Israelites apprehensions then were, he would not trust to them for the perpetuating his Law, but committed it to writing, *Ex.* 31. 18. nay wrote it twice himself.

Even the ceremonial Law, which was to be in daily practice was written by Moses. And the restitutions of religion in that nation, were by the book of the Law found and read; not by dormant tradition.

29. Yet farther even the ceremonial Law, tho not intended to be of perpetual obligation, was not yet referr'd to the traditionary way, but was wrote by *Moses*, and deposited with the Priests, *Deut.* 31. 9. And after-event shew'd this was no needless caution. For when under *Manasses*, Idolatry had prevail'd in *Jerusalem*, it was not by any dormant Tradition, but by the Book of the Law found in the Temple, that *Josiah* was both excited to reform Religion, and instructed how to do it, 2 *Kings* 22. 10. And had not that or som other copy bin produc'd, they had bin much in the dark as to the particulars of their reformation; which that they had not bin convei'd by Tradition, appears by the sudden startling of the King upon the reading of the Law; which could not have bin, had he bin before possest with the contents of it. In like manner we find in *Nehemiah*, that the observation of the Feast of Tabernacles was recover'd by consulting the Law; the Tradition whereof was wholly worn out; or else it had sure bin impossible that it could for so long a time have bin intermitted, *Neh.* 8. 18. And yet mens memories are commonly more retentive of an external visible Rite, then they are of speculative Propositions, or moral Precepts.

Hither God directs all appeals, to the Law and to the Testament.

30. These instances shew how fallible an expedient mere oral Tradition is for transmission to posterity. But admit no such instance could be given, 'tis argument enough that God has by his own choice of writing, given the preference to it. Nor has he barely chosen it, but has made it the standard by which to mesure all succeeding pretences. 'Tis the means he prescribes for distinguishing Divine from diabolical Inspirations: *To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, there is no light in them*, Isaiah 8. 20. And when the Lawyer interrogated our Savior

vior what he ſhould do to inherit eternal life, he ſends him not to ranſac Tradition, or the cabaliſtical Divinity of the Rabbins, but refers him to the Law: *What is written in the Law? How readeſt thou?* Luke 10. 26. And indeed, throout the Goſpel, we ſtill find him in his diſcourſe appealing to Scripture, and aſſerting its autority: as on the other ſide inveighing againſt thoſe Traditions of the Elders which had evacuated the written Word: *Ye make the Word of God of none effect by your Tradition*, Matt. 15. 6. Which as it abundantly ſhews Chriſts adherence to the written Word, ſo 'tis a pregnant inſtance how poſſible it is for Tradition to be corrupted, and made the inſtrument of impoſing mens fancies even in contradiction to Gods commands.

31. And ſince our bleſſed Lord has made Scripture the teſt whereby to try Traditions, we may ſurely acquieſce in his deciſion, and either embrace or reject Traditions, according as they correſpond to the ſupreme rule, the written Word. It muſt therefore be a very unwarrantable attemt to ſet up Tradition in competition with (much more in contradiction to) that to which Chriſt himſelf hath ſubjected it.

And our Lord shews that tradition did evacuat, and not preſerve the Law.

32. Saint *Paul* reckons it as the principal privilege of the Jewiſh Church, that it had the Oracles of God committed to it, *i.e.* that the holy Scriptures were depoſited, and put in its cuſtody: and in this the Chriſtian Church ſucceeds it, and is the guardian and conſervator of holy Writ. I ask then, had the Jewiſh Church by vertue of its being keeper, a power to ſuperſede any part of thoſe Oracles intruſted to them? If ſo, Saint *Paul* was much out in his eſtimate, and ought to have reckon'd that as their higheſt privilege. But indeed, the very nature of the truſt implies the contrary; and beſides, 'tis evident, that is the very crime Chriſt charges upon the Jews in the place above cited. And if the Jewiſh Church had no ſuch right, upon what account can the Chriſtian claim any? Has Chriſt enlarg'd its Charter? Has he left the ſacred Scriptures with her, not to preſerve and practice, but to regulate and reform? To fill up its vacancies, and ſupply its defects by her own Traditions? If ſo, let the commiſſion be produc'd; but if her office be only that of guardianſhip and truſt, ſhe muſt neither ſubſtract from, nor by any ſuperadditions of her own evacuate its meaning and efficacy: and to do ſo, would be the ſame guilt that it would be in a perſon intruſted with the fundamental Records of a Nation, to foiſt in ſuch clauſes as himſelf pleaſes.

Saint Paul reckons it as a peculiar privilege of the Jewiſh Church, that the Oracles of God were committed to them.

33. In ſhort, God has in the Scriptures laid down exact rules for our belief and practice, and has entruſted the Church to convey them to us: if ſhe vary, or any way enervate them, ſhe is falſe to that truſt, but cannot by it oblige us to recede from that rule ſhe ſhould deliver, to comply with that ſhe obtrudes upon us. The caſe may be illuſtrated by an eaſy reſemblance. Suppoſe a King have a foreign principality for which he compoſes a body of Laws; annexes to them rewards and penalties, and requires an exact and indiſpenſable conformity to them. Thoſe being put in writing, he ſends by a ſelect meſſenger: now ſuppoſe this meſſenger deliver them, yet ſaies withall, that himſelf has autority from the King to ſuperſede theſe Laws at his pleſure; ſo that their laſt reſort muſt be to his dictats, yet produces no other teſtimony but his own bare affirmation. Is it poſſible that any men in their wits ſhould be ſo ſtupidly credulous, as to incur the penalty of thoſe Laws upon ſo improbable an indemnity? And ſure it would be no whit leſs madneſs in Chriſtians, to violate any precept of God, on an ungrounded ſuppoſal of the Churches power to diſpenſe with them.

The power of the Church is to keep and explain, not evacuat the writen word.

If the universal Church have not power over the writen word, much less has a particular Church.

34. And if the Church universal have not this power, nor indeed ever claim'd it, it must be a strange insolence for any particular Church to pretend to it, as the Church of *Rome* do's; as if we should owe to her Tradition all our Scripture, and all our Faith; insomuch that without the supplies which she affords from the Oracle of her Chair, our Religion were imperfect, and our salvation insecure. Upon which wild dictates I shall take liberty in a distinct Section, farther to animadvert.

SECT. VI.

The Suffrage of the primitive Christian Church, concerning the propriety and fitness which the Scripture has towards the attainment of its excellent end.

The Scripture is sufficient to attain its end without the supplement of Tradition.

AGainst what has bin hitherto said to the advantage of the holy Scripture, there opposes it self (as we have already intimated) the autority of the Church of *Rome*; which allows it to be only an imperfect rule of Faith, saying in the fourth Session of the Council of *Trent*, that *Christian faith and discipline, are contain'd in the Books written, and unwitten Tradition.* And in the fourth rule of the Index put forth by command of the said Council, *the Scripture* is declar'd to be *so far from useful, that its reading is pernicious, if permitted promiscuously in the vulgar Tongue*, and therefore to be withheld: insomuch that the study of the holy Bible is commonly by persons of the Roman Communion, imputed to Protestants as part of their heresy; they being call'd by them in contemt the Evangelical men, and Scripturarians. And the Bible in the vulgar Tongue of any Nation, is commonly reckon'd among prohibited Books, and as such, publicly burnt when met with by the Inquisitors: and the person who is found with it, or to read therein, is subjected to severe penalties.

The Judgment of the Primitive Church therein.

2. For the vindication of the truth of God, and to put to shame those unhappy Innovators, who amidst great pretences to Antiquity, and veneration to the Scriptures, prevaricat from both: I think it may not be amiss to shew plainly the mind of the primitive Church herein; and that in as few words as the matter will admit.

The particular circumstance of Ireneus and Tertullian.

3. First I premise that *Ireneus* and *Tertullian* having to do with Heretics, who boasted themselves to be emendators of the Apostles, and wiser then they, despising their autority, rejecting several parts of the Scripture, and obtruding other writings in their stead, have had recourse unto Tradition, with a seeming preference of it unto Scripture. Their adversaries having no common principle besides the owning the name of Christians; it was impossible to convince them, but by a recourse to such a medium which they would allow. But these Fathers being to set down and establish their Faith, are most express in resolving it into Scripture: and when they recommend Tradition, ever mean such as is also Apostolical.

The Judgment of Ireneus.

4. Ireneus in the second Book, chap. 37. tells us, *that the Scriptures are perfect, as dictated by the word of God and his Spirit.* And the same Father begins his third Book in this manner, *The disposition of our salvation is no otherwise known by us, then by those by whom the Gospel was brought to us; which indeed they first preach'd, but afterward deliver'd it to us in the Scripture, to be the foundation and pillar of our Faith. Nor may we imagin, that they began to preach to others, before they themselves had perfect knowledg, as som are bold to say; boasting themselves to be emendators of the Apostles. For after our Lords Resur-*

Reſurrection, they were endued with the power of the holy Spirit from on high; and having perfect knowledg, went forth to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of ſalvation, and celeſtial praiſe unto men. Each and all of whom had the Goſpel of God. So Saint Matthew *wrote the Goſpel to the Hebrews, in their tongue. Saint* Peter *and Saint* Paul *preach'd at* Rome, *and there founded a Church:* Mark *the Diſciple and interpreter of* Peter, *deliver'd in writing what he had preach'd, and* Luke *the follower of* Paul *ſet down in his Book the Goſpel he had deliver'd. Afterward Saint* John *at* Epheſus *in* Aſia *publiſh'd his Goſpel, &c,* In his fourth Book, c. 66. he directs all the Heretics with whom he deals, to *read diligently the Goſpel deliver'd by the Apoſtles, and alſo read diligently the Prophets,* aſſuring *they ſhall there find every action, every doctrin, and every ſuffering of our Lord declared by them.*

5. Thus *Tertullian* in his Book of Preſcriptions, c. 6. *It is not lawful for us to introduce any thing of our own will, nor make any choice upon our arbitrement. We have the Apoſtles of our Lord for our Authors, who themſelves took up nothing of their own will or choice; but faithfully imparted to the Nations the Diſcipline which they had receiv'd from Chriſt. So that if an Angel from heaven ſhould teach another doctrin, he were to be accurſt.* And c. 25. *'Tis madneſs,* ſaies he of the Heretics, *when they confeſs that the Apoſtles were ignorant of nothing, nor taught things different; to think that they did not revele all things to all:* which he enforces in the following Chapter. In his Book againſt *Hermogenes,* c. 23. he diſcourſes thus; *I adore the plenitude of the Scripture, which diſcovers to me the Creator, and what was created. Alſo in the Goſpel I find the Word was the Arbiter and Agent in the Creation. That all things were made of preexiſtent matter I never read. Let* Hermogenes, *and his journy-men ſhew that it is written. If it be not written, let him fear the woe, which belongs to them that add or detract.* And in the 39. ch. of his Preſcript. *We feed our faith, raiſe our hope, and eſtabliſh our reliance with the ſacred Words.* *of Tertullian.*

6. In like manner *Hippolytus* in the Homily againſt *Noetus* declares, that *we acknowledge only from Scripture that there is one God. And whereas ſecular Philoſophy is not to be had, but from the reading of the doctrin of the Philoſophers; ſo whoſoever of us will preſerve piety towards God, he cannot otherwiſe learn it then from the holy Scripture.* Accordingly *Origen* in the fifth Homily on *Leviticus,* ſaies, that *in the Scripture every word appertaining to God, is to be ſought and diſcuſt; and the knowledg of all things is to be receiv'd.* *of Hippolytus.*

7. What Saint *Cyprian*'s opinion was in this point, we learn at large from his Epiſtle to *Pompey.* For when Tradition was objected to him, he anſwers; *Whence is this Tradition? is it from the autority of our Lord and his Goſpel; or comes it from the commands of the Apoſtles in their Epiſtles? Almighty God declares that what is written ſhould be obei'd and practic'd. The Book of the Law, ſaies he in* Joſhua, *ſhall not depart from thy mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate in it day and night, that you may obſerve and keep all that is written therein. So our Lord ſending his Apoſtles, commands them to baptize all Nations, and teach them to obſerve all things that he had commanded.* Again, *what obſtinacy and preſumtion is it to prefer human Tradition to divine Command: not conſidering that Gods wrath is kindled as often as his Precepts are diſſolv'd and neglected by reaſon of human Traditions? Thus God warns and ſpeaks by* Iſaiah: *This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; but in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrins the commandments of men. Alſo the Lord in the Goſpel checks and reproves, ſaying, you reject the Law of God, that you may eſtabliſh your Tradition.* *of S. Cypri.n.*

dition. Of which Precept the Apostle saint Paul *being mindful, admonishes and instructs, saying; If any man teaches otherwise, and hearkens not to sound doctrin, and the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing nothing: From such we must depart.* And again he adds, *There is a compendious way for religious and sincere minds, both to deposit their errors, and find out the truth. For if we return to the source and original of divine tradition, human error will cease, and the ground of heavenly mysteries being seen, whatsoever was hid with clouds and darkness, will be manifest by the light of truth. If a pipe that brought plentiful supplies of water, fail on the suddain, do not men look to the fountain, and thence learn the cause of the defect, whether the spring it self be dry; or if running freely, the water is stopt in its passage; that if by interrupted or broken conveiances, it was hindred to pass, they being repair'd, it may again be brought to the City, with the same plenty as it flows from the spring? And this Gods Priests ought to do at this time, obeying the commands of God, that if truth have swerv'd or fail'd in any particular, we go backward to the source of the Evangelical and Apostolical tradition, and there found our actings, from whence their order and origination began.*

Bellarmines exception shew'd to be vain by the Authority of Saint Austin.

8. It is true *Bellarmine* reproches this discourse as erroneous; but whatever it might be in the inference which Saint *Cyprian* drew from it, in it self it was not so. For Saint *Austin*, tho sufficiently ingag'd against Saint *Cyprians* conclusion, allows the position as most Orthodox; saying, in the fourth Book of Baptism, c. 35. *Whereas he admonishes to go back to the fountain, that is, the Tradition of the Apostles, and thence bring the stream down to our times; 'tis most excellent, and without doubt to be don.*

The judgment of Eusebius.

9. Thus *Eusebius* expresses himself in his second Book against *Sabellius. As it is a point of sloth, not to seek into those things, whereof one may enquire; so 'tis insolence to be inquisitive in others. But what are those things which we ought to enquire into? Even those which are to be found in the Scriptures: those things which are not there to be found, let us not seek after. For if they ought to be known, the holy Ghost had not omitted them in the Scripture.*

Of Athanasius.

10. Athanasius in his Tract of the Incarnation, saies, *It is fit for us to adhere to the word of God, and not relinquish it, thinking by syllogisms to evade what is there clearly deliver'd.* Again in his Tract to *Serap.* of the holy Ghost: *Ask not,* saies he, *concerning the Trinity, but learn only from the Scriptures. For the instructions which you will find there, are sufficient.* And in his Oration against the Gentiles, declares, *That the Scriptures are sufficient to the manifestation of the truth.*

Of Optatus.

11. Agreeable to these is *Optatus* in his 5. Book against *Parmen.* who reasons thus: *You say 'tis lawful to rebaptize, we say 'tis not lawful: betwixt your saying and our gain-saying the peoples minds are amus'd. Let no man believe either you or us. All men are apt to be contentious. Therefore Judges are to be call'd in. Christians they cannot be; for they will be parties, and thereby partial. Therefore a Judg is to be lookt out from abroad. If a Pagan, he knows not the mysteries of our Religion. If a Jew, he is an enemy to our baptism. There is therefore no earthly Judg; but one is to be sought from heaven. Yet there is no need of a resort to heaven, when we have in the Gospel a Testament. And in this case, celestial things may be compar'd to earthly. So it is as with a Father who has many children; while he is present he orders them all, and there is no need of a written Will: Accordingly Christ when he was present upon earth, from time to time commanded the Apostles whatsoever was necessary. But as the earthly father finding himself to be at the point of death, and fearing that after his departure his children should quarrel among themselves, he calls witnesses, and puts his mind in writing; and if any difference*

ference arise among the brethren, they go not to their fathers Sepulcher, but repair to his Will and Testament; and he who rests in his grave, speaks still in his writing, as if he were alive. Our Lord who left his Will among us, is now in heaven, therefore let us seek his commands in the Gospel, as in his Will.

12. Thus *Cyril of Jerus.* Cat. 4. *Nothing, no not the least concernment of the divine and holy Sacraments of our Faith, is to be deliver'd without the holy Scripture: believe not me unless I give you a demonstration of what I say from the Scripture.* *Of Cyril of Jerus.*

13. Saint *Basil* in his Book of the true Faith saies, *If God be faithful in all his sayings, his words, and works, they remaining for ever, and being don in truth and equity; it must be an evident sign of infidelity and pride, if any one shall reject what is written, and introduce what is not written.* In which Books he generally declares that he will write nothing but what he receives from the holy Scripture: and that he abhorr's from taking it elsewhere. In his 29. Homily against the Antitrinit. *Believe*, saies he, *those which are written; seek not those which are not written.* And in his Eth. reg. 26. *Every word and action ought to be confirm'd by the Testimony of the divinely inspir'd Scriptures to the establishment of the Faith of the good, and reproof of the wicked.* *Of Saint Basil.*

14. Saint *Ambrose* in the first Book of his Offic. saies: *How can we make use of any thing which is not to be found in the Scripture?* And in his Instit. of Virgins. *I read he is the first, but read not he is the second; let them who say he is the second, shew it from the reading.* *Of Saint Ambrose.*

15. Greg. *Nyssen* in his Dial. of the soul and resurrect. saies, *'Tis undeniable, that truth is there only to be plac'd, where there is the seal of Scripture Testimony.* *Of Gregor. Nyssen.*

16. Saint *Jerom* against *Helvidius* declares, *As we deny not that which is written, so we refuse those which are not written.* And in his Comment on the 98. Psal. *Every thing that we assert, we must shew from the holy Scripture. The word of him that speaks has not that autority as Gods precept.* And on the 87. Psal. *Whatever is said after the Apostles, let it be cut off, nor have afterwards autority. Tho one be holy after the Apostles, tho one be eloquent; yet has he not autority.* *Of Saint Jerom.*

17. Saint *Austin* in his Tract of the unity of the Church, c. 12. *acknowledges that he could not be convinc'd but by the Scriptures of what he was to believe; and adds they are read with such manifestation, that he who believes them, must confess the doctrin to be most true.* In the second Book of Christian doctrin, c. 9. he saies, that *in the plain places of Scripture are found all those things that concern Faith and Manners.* And in Epist. 42. *All things which have bin exhibited heretofore as don to mankind, and what we now see and deliver to our posterity, the Scripture has not past them in silence, so far forth as they concern the search or defence of our Religion.* In his Tract of the good of Widowhood, he saies to *Julian*, the person to whom he addresses: *What shall I teach you more then that we read in the Apostle: for the holy Scripture settles the rule of our doctrin; that we think not any thing more then we ought to think; but to think soberly, as God has dealt to every man the mesure of Faith. Therefore my teaching is only to expound the words of this Doctor,* Ep. 157. *Where any subject is obscure, and passes our comprehension, and the Scripture do's not plainly afford its help, there human conjecture is presumtuous in defining.* *Of Saint Austin.*

18. Theophilus of *Alex.* in his second Pascal homily, tells us, that *'tis the suggestion of a diabolical spirit to think that any thing besides the Scripture has divine autority.* And in his third he adds, that *the Doctors of the* *Of Theophilus Alex.*

Church

Church having the Testimony of the Scripture, lay firm foundation of their doctrin.

Of S^t. Chrysostom.

19. Chrysostom in his third Homily on the first of the *Thess.al.* asserts, that *from the alone reading or hearing of the Scripture one may learn all things necessary.* So Hom. 34. on Acts 15. he declares. *A heathen comes and saies: I would willingly be a Christian, but I know not who to join my self to; for there are many contentions among you, many seditions and tumults; so that I am in doubt what opinion I should chuse. Each man saies, what I say is true, and I know not whom to believe; each pretends to Scripture which I am ignorant of. 'Tis very well the issue is put here: for if the appeal were to reason, in this case there would be just occasion of being troubled: but when we appeal to Scripture, and they are simple and certain, you may easily your self judg. He that agrees with the Scripture is a Christian, he that resists them, is far out of the way.* And on Ps. 95. *If any thing be said without the Scripture, the mind halts between different opinions; somtimes inclining as to what is probable, anon rejecting as what is frivolous: but when the testimony of holy Scripture is produc'd, the mind both of speaker and hearer is confirm'd.* And Homil. 4. on *Lazar. Tho one should rise from the dead, or an Angel come down from heaven, we must believe the Scripture; they being fram'd by the Lord of Angels, and the quick and dead.* And Hom. 13. 2 Cor. 7. *Is it not an absurd thing that when we deal with men about mony, we will trust no body, but cast up the sum, and make use of our counters; but in religious affairs, suffer our selves to be led aside by other mens opinions, even then when we have by an exact scale and touch-stone, the dictat of the divine Law. Therefore I pray and exhort you, that giving no heed to what this or that man saies, you would consult the holy Scripture, and thence learn the Divine riches, and pursue what you have learnt.* And Hom. 58. on John 10. 1. *'Tis the mark of a thief, that he comes not in by the door, but another way: now by the door the testimony of the Scripture is signified.* And Hom. on Gal. 1. 8. *The Apostle saies not, if any man teach a contrary doctrin let him be accurs'd, or if he subvert the whole Gospel; but if he teach any thing beside the Gospel which you have receiv'd, or vary any little thing, let him be accurs'd.*

Of Cyril of Alexand.

20. Cyril of *Alex.* against *Jul. l.* 7. saies, *The holy Scripture is sufficient to make them who are instructed in it, wise unto salvation, and endued with most ample knowledg.*

Of Theodoret.

21. Theodoret Dial. 1. *I am perswaded only by the holy Scripture.* And Dial. 2. *I am not so bold to affirm any thing, not spoken of in the Scripture.* And again, Qu. 45. upon *Genes. We ought not to enquire after what is past over in silence, but acquiesce in what is written.*

From t'e premises laid down, the inference will be easy whether the Church of England be heretical in her determining the Scriptures to be a sufficient rule of faith without the aid of Tradition.

22. It were easy to enlarge this discourse into a Volume; but having taken, as they offer'd themselves, the suffrages of the writers of the four first Centuries, I shall not proceed to those that follow. If the holy Scripture were a perfect rule of Faith and Manners to all Christians heretofore, we may reasonably assure our selves it is so still; and will now guide us into all necessary truth, and consequently make us wise unto salvation, without the aid of oral Tradition, or the new mintage of a living infallible Judg of controversy. And the impartial Reader will be enabled to judg whether our appeal to the holy Scripture, in all occasions of controversy, and recommendation of it to the study of every Christian, be that heresy and innovation which it is said to be.

The guilt of taking away the Scriptures from the people a guilt of the highest nature.

23. It is, we know, severely imputed to the Scribes and Pharises by our Savior, that they took from the people *the key of knowledg*, Luke 11. 52. and had *made the word of God of none effect by their Traditions*, Matt. 15. 6. but they never attemted what has bin since practiced by their Successors in the Western Church, to take away the Ark of the Testament it self, and

cut

cut offnot only the efficacy, but very poſſeſſion of the word of God by their Traditions. Surely this had bin exceeding criminal from any hand: but that the Biſhops and Governours of the Church, and the univerſal and infallible paſtor of it, who claim the office to interpret the Scriptures, exhort unto, and aſſiſt in the knowledge of them, ſhould be the men who thus rob the people of them, carries with it the higheſt aggravations both of cruelty and breach of truſt. *If any man ſha'l take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy,* ſaies Saint *John*, Revel. 22. 19. *God ſ.all take away his part out of the Book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* What vengeance therefore awaits thoſe who have taken away not only from one Book, but at once the Books themſelves, even all the Scriptures, the whole Word of God?

SECT. VII.

Hiſtorical reflexions upon the Events which have happen'd in the Church ſince the withdrawing of the holy Scripture.

Pict res were made the books of the Laity when the Scriptures were taken from them.

TWill in this place be no uſeleſs contemplation to obſerve, after the Scriptures had been raviſht from the people in the Church of *Rome*, what pitiful pretenders were admitted to ſucceed. And firſt becauſe Lay-men were preſum'd to be illiterate, and eaſily ſeducible by thoſe writings which were in themſelves difficult, and would be wreſted by the *unlearned to their own deſtruction*; pictures were recommended in their ſtead, and complemented as the Books of the Laity, which ſoon emprov'd into a neceſſity of their worſhip, and that groſs ſuperſtition which renders Chriſtianity abominated by Turks, and Jews, and Heathens unto this day.

Hereby the ignorant became en'nar'd to idolatry.

2. I would not be haſty in charging Idolatry upon the Church of *Rome*, or all in her communion; but that their Image-worſhip is a moſt fatal ſnare, in which vaſt numbers of unhappy ſouls are taken, no man can doubt who hath with any regard travail'd in Popiſh Countries, I my ſelf, and thouſands of others, whom the late troubles, or other occaſions ſent abroad, are and have been witneſſes thereof. Charity, 'tis true, believes all things, but it do's not oblige men to disbelieve their eies. 'Twas the out-cry of *Micah* againſt the Danites, *Jud.* 18. 24. *ye have taken away my gods which I have made, and the prieſt, and are gone away, and what have I more?* but the Laity of the Roman Communion may enlarge the complaint, and ſay; you have taken away the oracles of our God, and ſet up every where among us graven and molten Images, and Teraphims, and what have we more? and 'twas lately the loud, and I doubt me is ſtill, the unanſwerable complaint of the poor Americans, that they were deni'd to worſhip their Pagod once in the year, when they who forbad them, worſhip'd theirs every day.

After the captivity of Babylon the Jews never fell into idolatry, by their having the Scriptures conſtantly read in their ſynagogues. The weſtern Chriſtian Church has inverted the obſervation.

3. The Jews before the Captivity, notwithſtanding the recent memory of the Miracles in Egypt and the Wilderneſs, and the firſt conqueſt of the Land of *Canaan* with thoſe that ſucceeded under the Judges and kings of *Iſrael* and *Juda*; as alſo the expreſs command of God, and the menaces of Prophets, ever and anon fell to downright Idolatry. but after their return unto this day, have kept themſelves from falling into that ſin, tho they had no Prophets to inſtruct them, no miracles or government to encourage or conſtrain them. The reaſon of which a very learn-

learned man in his discourse of religious Assemblies takes to be, the reading and teaching of the Law in their synagogues; which was perform'd with great exactness after the return from the captivity, but was not so perform'd before. And may we not invert the observation, and impute the Image-worship now set up in the Christian Church, to the forbidding the reading of the Scriptures in the Churches, and interdicting the privat use, and institution in them?

A second supply in the place of the Scripture were Legends, which made Christianity to be thought ridiculous.

4. For a farther supplement in place of the Scriptures, whose History was thought not edifying enough, the Legends of the Saints were introduc'd; stories so stupid, that one would imagin them design'd as an experiment how far credulity could be impos'd upon; or else fram'd to a worse intent, that Christianity by them might be made ridiculous. Yet these are recommended to use and veneration, while in the mean time the word of God is utterly forbidden, whereby the parties to this unhappy practice (that I may speak in the words of the prophet *Jerem.* 2. 13.) *have committed two evils, they have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

A third consequent was the obliging the public praiers to be be in an unknown tongue.

5. Farther yet, the same unreasonable tyranny which permitted not the Laity to understand Almighty God speaking to them in the Scripture; hinder'd them from being suffer'd to understand the Church or themselves speaking to him in their praiers; whilst the whole Roman office is so dispos'd, that in defiance of the Apostles discourse, 1 *Cor.* 14. *he that occupies the room of the unlearned must say amen, to those praiers and praises which he has no comprehension of:* and by his endless repetitions of Pater's, Ave's and Credo's, falls into that battology reprov'd by our Savior, *Matt.* 6. 7. and as 'twas said of the woman of *Samaria*, Joh. 4. 22. *knows not what he worships.* Yet this unaccountable practice is so much the darling of that Church, that when in *France* about eighteen years since, the Roman Missal was translated into the vulgar Tongue, and publish'd by the direction of several of their Bishops; the Clergy of *France* rose up in great fury against the attemt, anathematizing in their circular Epistles, *all that sold, read, or us'd the said book:* and upon complaint unto Pope *Alexander* the 7. he resented the matter so deeply, as to issue out his Bull against it in the following words:

The Pope's resentment of the translation of the Missal by the Bishops of France.

6. *Whereas sons of perdition, endevoring the destruction of souls, have translated the Roman Missal into the French tongue, and so attemted to throw down and trample upon the majesty of the holy Rites comprehended in Latin words: as we abominate and detest the novelty, which will deform the beauty of the Church, and produce disobedience, temerity, boldness, sedition and schism; so we condemn, reprobate and forbid, the said and all other such Translations, and interdict the reading and keeping to all and singular the faithful, of whatever sex, degree, order, condition, dignity, honor, or preeminence, &c. under pain of excommunication. And we command the copies to be immediatly burnt,* &c. So mortal a sin it seems 'twas thought for the Laity to understand the praiers in which they must communicate.

A fourth attemt of making a new authentic text.

7. Nor is this all; agreeable to the other attemts upon the holy Scripture, was the bold insolence of making a new authentic Text, in that unknown Tongue in which the offices of praier had bin, and were to be kept disguis'd; which was don by the decree of the Council of *Trent* in the fourth Session. But when the Council had given this prerogative to the Version which it call'd Vulgar, the succeeding Popes began to consider what that Version was; and this work *Pius* the forth and fifth set upon; but prevented by death fail'd to complete it, so that the honor of the performance

formance fell to *Sixtus* the fifth, who in the plenitude of his Apoſtolic power, the Tranſlation being reform'd to his mind, commanded it to be that genuine ancient Edition which the *Trent* Fathers had before made authentic, and under the pain of excommunication requir'd it to be ſo received: which he do's in this form: *Of our certain knowledg, and the plenitude of our Apoſtolic power, we order and declare that vulgar Edition which has bin receiv'd for authentic by the Council of* Trent, *is without doubt or controverſy to be eſteem'd this very one, which being amended as well as it is poſſible, and printed at the Vatican Preſs, we publiſh to be read in the whole Chriſtian Republic, and in all Churches of the Chriſtan world. Decreeing that it having bin approv'd by the conſent of the holy univerſal Church, and the holy Fathers, and then by the Decree of the general Council of* Trent, *and now by the Apoſtolic autority deliver'd to us by the Lord; is the true, legitimate, authentic, and undoubted, which is to be received and held in all public and privat Diſputations, Lectures, Preachings and Expoſitions,* &c. But notwithſtanding this certain knowledg and plenitude of Apoſtolic power, ſoon after came *Clement* the eighth, and again reſumes the work of his Predeceſſor *Sixtus*, diſcovers great and many errors in it, and puts out one more reform'd, yet confeſt by himſelf to be imperfect; which now ſtands for the authentic Text, and carries the title of the Bible put forth by *Sixtus*, notwithſtanding all its alterations. So well do's the Roman Church deſerve the honor which ſhe pretends to, of being the *miſtreſs of all Churches*; and ſo infallible is the holy Chair in its determinations: and laſtly, ſo authentic a Tranſcript of the word of God (concerning which 'tis ſaid Mat. 5. 18. *one jot or one title ſhall not fail*) is that which ſhe eſtabliſht, and that has receiv'd ſo many, and yet according to the confeſſion of the infallible Corrector, wants ſtill more alterations.

8. Dependent upon this, and as great a miſchief as any of the former, conſequent to the with-drawing of the Scripture, I take to be the ſtep it made to the overthrow of the ancient and moſt uſeful diſciplin of the Church in point of Penance, whoſe rigors alwayes heretofore preceded the poſſibility of having Abſolution. Now of this we know a ſolemn part was the ſtate of Audience, when the lapſt perſon was receiv'd, after long attendance without doors, proſtrations, and lamentations there, within the entrance of the Church; and was permitted with the Catechumens Candidats of Baptiſm, to hear the readings of the Scripture, and ſtay till Praier began, but then depart. He was oblig'd to hear the terrors of the Lord, the threats of the Divine Law againſt ſin and ſinners, to ſtand among the unbaptiz'd and heathen multitude, and learn again the elements of that holy Faith from which he had prevaricated; and ſo in time be render'd capable of the devotions of the faithful, and afterward the reception of the Euchariſt. But when the Scriptures were thought uſeleſs or dangerous to be underſtood and heard, it was conſequent that the ſtate of Audience ſhould be cut off from Penance, and that the next to it, upon the ſelf-ſame principle ſhould be diſmiſt: and ſo the long probation formerly requir'd ſhould be ſupplanted; and the compendious way of pardoning firſt, and repenting afterwards, the endleſs circle of ſinning and being abſolv'd, and then ſinning and being abſolv'd again, ſhould prevail upon the Church. Which ſtill obtains, notwithſtanding the complaints, and irrefragable demonſtrations of learned men even of the Romiſh Communion, who plainly ſhew this now receiv'd method, to be an innovation groundleſs and unreaſonable, and moſt pernicious in its conſequents.

A further conſequent was the laying aſide the ancient courſe of penance.

Heretofore not only those who were under censure, but the unbaptiz'd were in the state of Audience to hear the scriptures read.

9. And, by the way, we may take notice that there cannot be a plainer evidence of the judgment of the Church, concerning the necessity of the Scriptures being known, not only by the learned but mean Christian, and the interest they have therein; then is the ancient course of Penance, establisht by the practice of all the first Ages, and almost as many Councils, whether general or local, as have decreed any thing concerning Disciplin; with the penitentiary Books and Canons, which were written for the first eleven hundred years in the whole Christian world. For if even the unbaptiz'd Catechumen, and the lapst sinner, notwithstanding their slender knowledg in the mysteries of Faith, or frail pretence to the privilege thereof, had a right to the state of Audience, and was oblig'd to hear the Scripture read; surely the meanest unobnoxious Laic, was in as advantageous circumstances, and might not only be trusted with the reading of those sacred Books, but might claim them as his birthright.

Ignorance and immorality consequents of withdrawing the scripture.

10. I may justly, over and above what has bin hitherto alleg'd, impute to the Governors of the same Church, and their withholding from the Laity the holy Scripture; the many dangerous errors, gross ignorances, and scandalous immoralities which have prevail'd among them both. It is no new method of divine vengeance, that there should *be like people, like priest*, Hos. 4. 9. *and that the Idol shepherd who led his flock into the ditch, should fall therein himself*, Mat. 15. 41. And as the Prophet *Zachary* describes it, c. 11. 17. *The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eie: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eie shall be utterly darkned.*

And lastly leud reproches of scripture.

11. But no consequence can be more obviously deducible from that practice, then that men should justify the with-holding of the Scripture by lessening its credit, and depreciating its worth: which has occasion'd those reproches which by the writers of the Church of *Rome*, of best note, have bin cast upon it. As that it was *a Nose of wax, a leaden rule, a deaf and useless deputy to God in the office of a judg; of less autority then the Roman Church, and of no more credit then* Esops *Fables, but for the testimony of the said Church; that they contain things apt to raise laughter or indignation, that the Latin Translation in the Complutensian Bible is placed between the Hebrew Text, and the Septuagint Version, as our Savior was at his Crucifixion between two thieves; and that the Vulgar edition is of such autority that the Originals ought to be mended by it, rather then it should be mended from them:* which are the complements of Cardinal *Bellarmin, Hosius, Eckius, Perron, Ximines, Coqueus*, and others of that Communion: words to be answer'd by a Thunderbolt, and fitter for the mouth of a *Celsus* or a *Porphyrie*, then of the pious sons, and zealous champions of the Church of Christ.

The excuse made by the Romanists consider'd

12. 'Tis to be expected that the Romanists should now wipe their mouths, and plead not guilty; telling us that they permit the Scripture to the Laity in their mother Tongue: And to that purpose the Fathers of *Rhemes* and *Doway* have publisht an English Bible for those of their Communion. I shall therefore give a short and plain account of the whole affair, as really it stands, and then on Gods name let the Romanists make the best of their Apology.

The licence of reading the scripture is so clog'd, that few will be capable of that indulgence.

13. The fourth rule of the Index of prohibited Books compos'd upon the command and auspice of the Council of *Trent*, and publish'd by the Autority of *Pius* the fourth, *Sixtus* the fifth, and *Clement* the eighth, runs thus, *Since 'tis manifest by experience, that if the holy Bible be suffer'd promiscuously in the Vulgar tongue, such is the temerity of men, that greater detriment then advantage will thence arise; in this matter let the judgment of the Bishop or Inquisitor be stood to: that with the advice of the Curat or Confessor, they*

may

may give leave for the reading of the Bible in the vulgar Tongue, tranſlated by Catholics, to ſuch as they know will not receive damage, but increaſe of Faith and Piety thereby. Which faculty they ſhall have in writing; and whoſoever without ſuch faculty ſhall preſume to have or to read the Bible, he ſhall not till he have deliver'd it up, receive abſolution of his ſins. Now (to paſs over the iniquity of obliging men to ask leave to do that which God Almighty commands) when 'tis conſider'd how few of the Laity can make means to the Biſhop or Inquiſitor, or convince them, or the Curat or Confeſſor, that they are ſuch who will not receive damage, but increaſe of Faith and Piety by the reading of the Scripture; and alſo have intereſt to prevail with them for their favor herein: and after all, can and will be at the charge of taking out the faculty, which is ſo penally requir'd: 'tis eaſy to gueſs what thin numbers of the Laity are likely or indeed capable of reaping benefit by this Indulgence pretended to be allowed them.

Beſides, is in it ſelf declar'd to be void.

14. But, beſides all this what ſhall we ſay, if the power it ſelf of giving Licences be a mere ſhew, and really ſignifies juſt nothing? In the obſervation ſubjoin'd to this fourth rule it is declar'd, that *the Impreſſion and Edition thereof gives no new faculty to Biſhops, or Inquiſitors, or Superiors of regulars, to grant Licences of buying, reading, or retaining Bibles publiſht in a vulgar Tongue; ſince hitherto by the command and practice of the holy Roman and univerſal Inquiſition, the power of giving ſuch faculties, to read or retain vulgar Bibles, or any parts of Scripture of the Old or New Teſtament, in any vulgar Tongue; or alſo ſummaries or hiſtorical compendiums of the ſaid Bibles or Books of Scripture, in whatever Tongue they are written, has bin taken away.* And ſure if a Lay-man cannot read the Bible without a faculty, and it is not in any ones power to grant it; 'twill evidently follow that he cannot read it: And ſo the pretence of giving liberty, owns the ſhame of openly refuſing it, but has no other effect or conſequence. And if any Romaniſt among us, or in any other Proteſtant Country enjoies any liberty herein, 'tis merely by connivance, and owed to a fear leaſt the Votary would be loſt, and take the Bible where it was without difficulty to be had, if ſtrictneſs ſhould be us'd. And ſhould Popery, which God forbid, become paramount; the Tranſlations of the Scripture into our Mother Tongues, would be no more endur'd here, then they are in *Spain:* and they who have formerly bin wary in communicating the Scriptures, remembring how thereby their errors have bin detected, would upon a revolution effectually provide for the future, and be ſure to keep their people in an Egyptian darkneſs, that might it ſelf be felt, but that allow'd the notices of no other object. They would not be content with that compoſition of the Ammonite, to *thruſt out all the right eies* of thoſe that ſubmitted to them, 1 *Sam.* 11. 2. but would put out both, as the Philiſtins did to *Samſon*, that they might make their miſerable captives for ever *grind in their Mill*, Jud. 16. 21.

The way for Proteſtants to keep their Bibles, is to live worthy the bleſſing they enjoy in them.

15. But this heavieſt of judgments will never fall upon the reform'd Churches, till by their vicious practice and contemt of the Divine Law, they have deſerted their profeſſion, and made themſelves utterly unworthy of the bleſſings they enjoy, and the light of that Goſpel which with noon-day brightneſs has ſhin'd among them. Upon which account, I ſuppoſe it may not be impertinent in the next place to ſubjoin ſom plain directions, and cautionary advices, concerning the uſe of theſe ſacred Books.

SECT. VIII.

Necessary cautions to be us'd in the reading of the holy Scriptures.

What qualifications are necessary to make the Scripture usefull to the reader.

IT is a common observation, that the most generous and sprightly Medicins are the most unsafe, if not appli'd with due care and regimen: And the remark holds as well in spiritual as corporal remedies. The Apostle asserts it upon his own experience that the doctrin of the Gospel, which was to som *the savor of life unto life*, *was to others the savor of death*, 2 Cor. 2. 15. And the same effect that the oral Word had then, the writen Word may have now; not that either the one or the other have any thing in them that is of it self mortiferous, but becomes so by the ill disposition of the persons who so pervert it. It is therefore well worth our inquiry, what qualifications on our part are necessary to make the Word be to us what it is in it self, *the power of God unto salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. Of these som are previous before our reading, som are concomitant with it, and som are subsequent and follow after it.

First, to come with sincerity.

2. Of those that go before, sincerity is a most essential requisit: by sincerity, I mean an upright intention, by which we direct our reading to that proper end for which the holy Scriptures were design'd; *viz.* the knowing Gods will in order to the practicing it. This honest simplicity of heart is that which Christ represents by the *good ground*, where alone it was that the seed could fructify, *Matt.* 13. 8. And he that brings not this with him, brings only the shadow of a Disciple. The *word of God is* indeed *sharper then a two-edged sword*, Heb. 4. 12. but what impression can a sword make on a body of air; which still slips from, and eludes its thrusts? And as little can all the practical discourses of holy Writ make on him, who brings only his speculative faculties with him, and leaves his will and affections behind him; which are the only proper subjects for it to work on.

As the guides of practice.

3. To this we may probably impute that strange inefficaciousness we see of the Word. Alas, men rarely apply it to the right place: our most inveterat diseases lie in our morals; and we suffer the Medicin to reach no farther then our intellects. As if he that had an ulcer in his bowels, should apply all his balsoms and sanatives only to his head. 'Tis true, the holy Scriptures are the tresures of Divine Wisdom; the Oracles to which we should resort for saving knowledg: but they are also the rule and guide of holy Life: and he that covets to know Gods will for any purpose but to practice it, is only studious to entitle himself to the greater number of *stripes*, Luke 12. 47.

And not bare knowle ge.

4. Nay farther, he that affects only the bare knowledg, is oft disappointed even of that. The Scripture, like the Pillar of fire and cloud, enlightens the Israelites, those who sincerely resign themselves to its guidance; but it darkens and confounds the Egyptians, *Ex.* 14. 20. And 'tis frequently seen, that those who read only to become knowing, are toll'd on by their curiosity into the more abstruse and mysterious parts of Scripture, where they entangle themselves in inextricable mazes and confusions; and instead of acquiring a more superlative knowledg, lose those easy and common notions which lie obvious to every plain well meaning Reader. I fear this Age affords too many and too frequent instances of this, in men who have lost God in the midst of his Word, and studied Scripture till they have renounc'd its Author.

5. And

5. And ſure this infatuation is very juſt, and no more then God himſelf has warn'd us of, who *takes the wiſe in their own craftineſs*, Job. 5. 12. but appropriates his *ſecrets only to them that fear him*, and has promis'd *to teach the meek his way*, Pſal. 25. 9. 14. And this was the method Chriſt obſerv'd in his preaching; unveiling thoſe truths to his Diſciples, which to the Scribes and Phariſees, his inquiſitive, yet refractory hearers, he wrapt up in parables: not that he diſlik'd their deſire of knowledg, but their want of ſincerity: which is ſo fatal a defect as blaſts our purſuits, tho of things in themſelves never ſo excellent. This we find exemplifi'd in *Simon Magus*, Acts 8. who tho he coveted a thing in it ſelf very deſirable, the power of conferring the holy Ghoſt, yet deſiring it not only upon undue conditions, but for ſiniſter ends, he not only miſt of that, but was (after all his convincement by the Apoſtles miracles, and the engagement of his Baptiſm) immerſt *in the gall of bitterneſs*; and laſt advanc'd to that height of blaſphemy, as to ſet up himſelf for a God, ſo becoming a laſting *memento*, how unſafe it is to prevaricate in holy things.

The ſpeculative enquirers frequently loſe God in the midſt of his word.

6. But as there is a ſincerity of the Will in order to practice, ſo there is alſo a ſincerity of the underſtanding in order to belief; and this is alſo no leſs requiſit to the profitable reading of Scripture. I mean by this, that we come with a preparation of mind, to embrace indifferently whatever God there reveles as the object of our Faith: that we bring our own opinions, not as the clue by which to unfold Scripture, but to be tried and regulated by it. The want of this has bin of very pernicious conſequence in matters both of Faith and ſpeculation. Men are commonly prepoſſeſt ſtrongly with their own notions, and their errand to Scripture is not to lend them light to judg of them, but aids to back and defend them.

There is requir'd ſincerity not only in reference to practice, but alſo ſpeculation.

7. Of this there is no Book of controverſy that do's not give notorious proof. The Socinian can eaſily over-look the beginning of Saint *John*, that ſaies, *The Word was God*, John 1. 1. and all thoſe other places which plainly aſſert the Deity of our Savior; if he can but divert to that other more agreeable Text, that *the Father is greater then I.* Among the Romaniſts, *Peters* being ſaid to be *firſt among the Apoſtles*, Matt. 10. 2. and that *on that Rock Chriſt would build his Church*, Matt. 16. 18. carries away all attention from thoſe other places where Saint *Paul* ſaies he was not *behind the very chiefeſt of the Apoſtles*, 2 Cor. 11. 5. that upon him lay *the care of all the Churches*, 2 Cor. 11. 28. and that the Church was not built upon the *foundation of ſom one, but all the twelve Apoſtles*, Revel. 21. 14. So it fares in the buſineſs of the Euchariſt: *This is my body*, Matt. 26. 26. carries it away clear for Tranſubſtantiation, when our Saviors calling that which he drunk *the fruit of the vine*, Matt. 26. 29. and then Saint *Pauls* naming the Elements in the Lords Supper ſeveral times over, Bread and Wine; *The Bread that we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt: the Cup that we bleſs, is it not the Communion, &c.* 1 Cor. 10. 16. And again, *He that eats this Bread, and drinks this Cup unworthily, &c.* 1 Cor. 11. 29. can make no appearance of an Argument.

This appears in ſeveral great inſtances.

8. Thus men once engag'd, ranſac for Texts that carry ſom correſpondence to the opinions they have imbibed; and thoſe how do they rack and ſcrue to bring to a perfect conformity; and improve every little probability into a demonſtration? On the other ſide, the contrary Texts they look on as enemies, and conſider them no farther then to provide fences and guards againſt them: So they bring Texts not into the ſcales to weigh, but into the field to skirmiſh, as Partizans and Auxiliaries of ſuch or ſuch opinions.

Men engag'd look on contrary texts as enemies, and fortify againſt them.

9. By

Bend the rule to their work. 9. By this force of prepossession it is, that that sacred Rule, which is the mesure and standard of all rectitude, is it self bow'd and distorted to countenance and abet the most contrary tenets: and like a variable picture, represents differing shapes according to the light in which you view it. And sure we cannot do it a worse office then to represent it thus dissonant to it self. Yet thus it must still be till men come unbiast to the reading of it. And certainly there is all the reason in the world they should do so: the ultimate *end of our faith is but the salvation of our souls*, 1 Pet. 1. 9. and we may be sure the Scripture can best direct us what Faith it is which will lead us to that end.

We should enquire the way to heaven with a travailers indifference. 10. Why should we not then have the same indifference which a traveller hath, whether his way lie on this hand or that; so as it be the direct road to his journies end? For altho it be infinitly material that I embrace right principles, yet 'tis not so that this should be right rather then the other: and our wishes that it should be so, proceed only from our prepossessions and fondness of our own conceptions, then which nothing is more apt to intercept the clear view of truth. It therefore nearly concerns us to deposit them, and to give up our selves without reserve to the guidance of God's Word, and give it equal credit when it thwarts, as when it complies with our own notions.

The prejudicate reserve the last appeal to themselves, tho they pretend the Scripture to be a judge of controversies. 11. Without this, tho we may call Scripture the rule of Faith, and judg of controversies; yet 'tis manifest we make it not so, but reserve still the last appeal to our own prejudicat fancies: and then no wonder, tho we fall under the same occecation which our Savior upbraids to the Jews, *that seeing, we see not, neither do we understand*, Matt. 13. 14. For he that will not be sav'd Gods way, will hardly be so by his own. He that resolves not impartially to embrace all the Scriptures dictats, comes to them as unsincerely, as the remnant of the Jews did to *Jeremiah* to inquire of the Lord for them, which he no sooner had don, but they protest against his message, *Jer.* 42. 20. and may expect as fatal an event.

There are others who read the Scriptures insidiously to cavil at them. 12. But there are a set of men who deal yet more insincerely with the Word; that read it insidiously, on purpose to collect matter of objection and cavil: that with a malicious diligence compare Texts in hope to find contradictions; and read attentively, but to no other end then to remark incoherences and defects in the stile: which when they think they have started, they have their design; and never will use a quarter of the same diligence in considering how they may be solv'd, or consulting with those who may assist them in it. For I think I may appeal to the generality of those who have rais'd the loudest clamors against the Scripture, whether they have endeavor'd to render themselves competent judges of it by inquiring into the Originals, or informing themselves of those local Customs, peculiar Idioms, and many other circumstances, by which obscure Texts are to be clear'd. And tho I do not affirm it necessary to salvation that every man should do this; yet I may affirm it necessary to him that will pretend to judg of the Bible: and he that without this condemns it, do's it as manifest injury, as a judg that should pass sentence only upon the Indictment, without hearing the defence.

Who yet never thoroly consider'd them. 13. And certainly there cannot be any thing more unmanly and disingenuous, then for men to inveigh and condemn before they inquire and examin. Yet this is the thing upon which so many value themselves, assuming to be men of reason, for that for which the Scripture pronounces them brute beasts, viz. *the speaking evil of those things they understand not*, 2 Pet. 2. 12. Would men use due diligence, no doubt many of those seeming

ſeeming contradictions would be reconcil'd, and the obſcurities clear'd: and if any ſhould after all remain, he might find twenty things fitter to charge it on, then want of verity or perſpicuity in the inſpir'd writers.

Allowances which the circumſtances of the writing the Scripture neceſſarily require.

14. Alas what human writing is there of near that Antiquity, wherein there are not many paſſages unintelligible? And indeed, unleſs modern times knew all thoſe national cuſtoms, obſolete Laws, particular Rites and Ceremonies, Phraſes and proverbial Sayings, to which ſuch ancient Books refer, 'tis impoſſible but ſom paſſages muſt ſtill remain obſcure. Yet in theſe we ordinarily have ſo much candor, as to impute their unintelligibleneſs to our own ignorance of thoſe things which ſhould clear them, the improprieties of ſtile, to the variation that times make in dialects, or to the errors of Scribes, and do not preſently exclaim againſt the Authors as falſe or impertinent, or diſcard the whole Book for ſom ſuch paſſages.

Which allowances are given to other books with leſs reaſon.

15. And ſure what allowances we make to other Books, may with more reaſon be made to the Bible; which having bin writ ſo many Ages ſince, paſt thro infinit variety of hands, and (which is above all) having bin the object of the Devils and wicked mens malice, lies under greater diſadvantages then any human compoſure: And doubtleſs men would be as equitable to that as they are to others, were it not that they more wiſh to have that falſe or irrational then any other Book. The plain parts of it, the precepts and threatnings ſpeak clearer then they deſire, gall and fret them; and therefore they will revenge themſelves upon the obſcurer. and ſeem angry that there are ſom things they underſtand not, when indeed their real diſpleſure is at thoſe they do.

A ſecond preparatory qualification to the reading the Scripture is reverence.

16. A ſecond qualification preparatory to reading the Scripture is reverence. When we take the Bible in our hands, we ſhould do it with other ſentiments and apprehenſions then when we take a common Book; conſidering that is the word of God, the inſtrument of our ſalvation; or upon our abuſe of it, a promoter of our ruin.

Not to read it caſualty and at a venture.

17. And ſure this, if duly apprehended, cannot but ſtrike us with a reverential awe, make us to ſay with *Jacob*, Gen. 28. 17. *ſurely God is in this place*; controle all trifling fancies, and make us read, not for cuſtom or divertiſement, but with thoſe ſolemn and holy intentions which become the dignity of its Author. Accordingly we find holy men have in all Ages bin affected with it; and ſom to the inward reverence of the mind, have join'd the outward of the body alſo, and never read it but upon their knees: an example that may both inſtruct and reproach our profaneſs; who commonly read by chance, and at a venture: If a Bible happen in our way, we take it up as we would do a Romance, or Play-book; only herein we differ, that we diſmiſs it much ſooner, and retain leſs of its impreſſions.

Which ſort of negligence Numa forbad in ſacred things.

18. It was a Law of *Numa*, that no man ſhould meddle with Divine things, or worſhip the Gods, in paſſing, or by accident, but make it a ſet and ſolemn buſineſs. And every one knows with how great ceremony and ſolemnity the heathen Oracles were conſulted. How great a ſhame is it then for Chriſtians to defalk that reverence from the true God, which heathens allow'd their falſe ones?

This negligence happens either for want of habitual reverence to God; or our actual exciting it.

19. Now this proceeds ſomtimes from the want of that habitual reverence we ſhould alwaies have to it as Gods word, and ſomtimes from want of actual exciting it, when we go to read: for if the habit lie only dormant in us, and be not awak'd by actnal conſideration, it avails us as little in our reading, as the habitual ſtrength of a man do's towards labor, when when he will not exert it for that end.

Where there is no reverence, there will be no obedience.

20. We ought therefore, as to make it our deliberat choice to read Gods word; so when we do it, to stir up our selves to those solemn apprehensions of its dignity and autority, as may render us malleable, and apt to receive its impressions: for where there is no reverence, 'tis not to be expected there should be any genuine or lasting obedience.

Saint Austin makes the first requisite to the knowledge of the Scripture, the love of it.

21. Saint *Austin* in his Tract to *Honoratus* of the advantage of believing, makes the first requisit to the knowledg of the Scriptures to be the love of them. *Believe me*, saies he, *every thing in the Scripture is sublime and Divine, its truth and doctrin are most accommodate to the refreshment, and building up of our minds: and in all respects so order'd, that every one may draw thence what is sufficient for him; provided he approach it with devotion, piety and religion. The proof of this may require much reasoning and discourse. But this I am first to perswade, that you do not hate the Authors, and then that you love them. Had we an ill opinion of* Virgil, *nay, if upon the account of the reputation he has gain'd with our Predecessors, we did not greatly love, before we understood him; we should never patiently go thro all the difficult questions Grammarians raise about him. Many employ themselves in commenting upon him; we esteem most, whose exposition most commends the Book, and shews that the Author, not only was free from error, but did excellently well where he is not understood. And if such an account happen not to be given, we impute it rather to the Interpreter then the Poet.*

None enquires of the tenets of any Sect of Philosophers, from his adversary.

22. Thus the good Father; whose words I have transcrib'd at large, as being remarkable to the present purpose; he also shews that the mind of no Author is to be learnt from one averse to his doctrin: as that 'tis vain to enquire of *Aristotles* Book from one of a different Sect: Or of *Archimedes* from *Epicurus:* the discourse will be as displeasing as the speaker; and that shall be esteem'd absurd, which comes from one that is envi'd or despis'd.

A third preparative is Praier.

23. A third preparative to our reading should be praier. The Scripture as it was dictated at first by the Holy Spirit, so must still owe its effects and influence to its cooperation. *The things of God*, the Apostle tells us, *are spiritually discern'd*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. And tho the natural man may well enough apprehend the letter, and grammatical sense of the Word; yet its power and energy, that insinuative perswasive force whereby it works on hearts, is peculiar to the Spirit; and therefore without his aids, the Scripture whilst it lies open before our eies, may still be *as a Book that is seal'd*, Esai. 29. 11. be as ineffective as if the characters were illegible.

This will be the more necessary, because the devil is busie to steal away the seed that is sown.

24. Besides our Savior tells us the devil is still busy *to steal away the seed as soon as it is sown*, Matt. 13. 17. And unless we have som better guard then our own vigilance, he is sure enough to prosper in his attemt. Let it therefore be our care to invoke the Divine Aid; and when ever we take the Bible into our hands, to dart up at least a hearty ejaculation, that we may find its effects in our hearts. Let us say with *David*, *open thou mine eies O Lord, that I may see the wondrous things of thy Law. Blessed art thou O Lord, O teach me thy statutes*, Psal. 119. Nay indeed 'twill be fit matter of a daily solemn devotion, as our Church has made it an annual in the Collect on the second Sunday in Advent: a praier so apt and fully expressive of what we should desire in this particular, that if we transcribe not only the example, but the very words, I know not how we can form that part of our devotion more advantageously.

Considerations requir'd at the time of reading.

25. In the second place we are to consider what is requir'd of us at the time of reading the Scripture; which consists principally in two things. The first of these is attention, which is so indispensably requisit, that without it all Books are alike, and all equally insignificant: for he that adverts not to the

to the ſenſe of what he reads, the wiſeſt diſcourſes ſignify no more to him, then the moſt exquiſit muſic do's to a man perfectly deaf. The letters and ſyllables of the Bible are no more ſacred then thoſe of another Book; 'tis the ſenſe and meaning only that is Divinely inſpir'd: and he that conſiders only the former, may as well entertain himſelf with a ſpelling-book.

26. We muſt therefore keep our minds fixt and attend to what we read: 'tis a folly and lightneſs not to do ſo in human Authors; but 'tis a ſin and danger not to do ſo in this Divine Book. We know there can ſcarce be a greater inſtance of contemt and diſvalue, then to hear a man ſpeak, and not at all mind what he ſaies: yet this vileſt affront do all thoſe put upon God, who hear or read his Word, and give it no attention. Yet I fear the practice is not more impious then it is frequent: for there are many that read the Bible, who if at the end of each Chapter they ſhould be call'd to account, I doubt they could produce very ſlender collections: and truly 'tis a ſad conſideration, that that ſacred Book is read moſt attentively by thoſe, who read it as ſom *preach the Goſpel*, Phil. 1. 15. *out of envy and ſtrife*. How curiouſly do men inſpect, nay ranſac and embowel a Text to find a pretence for cavil and objection, whilſt men who profeſs to look there for life and ſalvation, read with ſuch a wretchleſs heedleſneſs, as if it could tell them nothing they were concern'd in: and to ſuch 'tis no wonder if their reading bring no advantage. God is not in this ſenſe *found of thoſe that ſeek him not*, Eſaiah 65. 1. 'Tis Satans part to ſerve himſelf of the bare words and characters of holy Writ, for charms and amulets: the vertue God has put there conſiſts in the ſenſe and meaning, and can never be drawn out by drouſy inadverting Readers.

'Tis a ſad contemplation that the Scripture is read moſt diligently by thoſe who would cavil at it.

27. This unattentiveneſs fore-ſtalls all poſſibility of good. How ſhall that convince the underſtanding, or perſwade the affections, which do's not ſo much as enter the imagination? So that in this caſe the ſeed ſeems more caſt away then in any of thoſe inſtances the parable gives, *Matt.* 13. In thoſe it ſtill fell upon the ſoil, but in this it never reaches that; but is ſcatter'd and diſſipated, as with a mighty wind, by thoſe thoughts which have prepoſſeſs'd the mind. Let no man therefore take this ſacred Book into his hand, till he have turn'd out all diſtracting fanſies, and have his faculties free and vacant for thoſe better objects which will there preſent themſelves. And when he has ſo diſpos'd himſelf for attention, then let him contrive to improve that attention to the beſt advantage.

The thoughts of the world are firſt to be laid aſide before we take up the Scripture.

28. To which purpoſe it may be very conducive to put it into ſom order and method. As for inſtance, when he reads the doctrinal part of Scripture, let him firſt and principally advert to thoſe plain Texts which contain the neceſſary points of Faith: that he may not owe his Creed only to his education, the inſtitution of his Parents or Tutors; but may know the true foundation on which it is bottom'd, *viz.* the word of God, and may thence be able to juſtify his Faith: and as Saint *Peter* exhorts, be ready to give an anſwer to *every man that asks him a reaſon of the hope that is in him*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. For want of this it is, that Religion ſits ſo looſe upon men, that every wind of doctrin blows them into diſtinct and various forms; till at laſt their Chriſtianity it ſelf vapors away and diſappears.

Herein 'twill be conducive to reflect a-part on Doctrinals;

29. But let men be careful thus to ſecure the foundation, and then 'twill be commendable in them (who are capable of it) to aſpire to higher degrees of ſpeculation: yet even in theſe it will be their ſafeſt courſe chiefly to purſue ſuch as have the moſt immediat influence on practice, and be more induſtrious to make obſervations of that ſort, then curious and critical remarks, or bold conjectures upon thoſe myſteries on which God has ſpread a veil.

and precepts.

To take in the assistance of expositors.

30. But besides a mans own particular collections, it will be prudence in him to advantage himself of those of others, and to consult the learnedst and best expositors; and that not only upon a present emergency, when he is to dispute a point, (as most do) but in the constant course of his reading, wherein he will most sedately and dispassionatly judg of the notions they offer.

Some parts of Scripture require more of our study then others.

31. As to the choice of the portions of Scripture to be read in course, tho I shall not condemn that of reading the whole Bible in order, yet 'tis apparent that som parts of it (as that of the Levitical Law) are not so aptly accommodated to our present state, as others are; and consequently not so edificatory to us: and therefore I cannot see why any man should oblige himself to an equal frequency in reading them. And to this our Church seems to give her suffrage, by excluding such out of her public Lessons. And if we govern our privat reading by her mesures, it will well express our deference to her judgment; who has selected som parts of Scripture, not that she would keep her children in ignorance of any, but becaus they tend most immediatly to practice.

The method of the Church excludes not additions of our own.

32. Neither will the daily reading the Scripture in the Rubric's order, hinder any man from acquainting himself with the rest. For he may take in the other parts as supernumeraries to his constant task, and read them as his leisure and inclination shall promt. So that all the hurt that can accrue to him by this method, is the being invited to read somtimes extraordinary proportions.

The objection against using the same readings with the Church is answerd.

33. If it be objected, that to those who daily hear the Church Service, 'twill be a kind of tautology, first to read those Lessons in privat, which soon after they shall hear read publicly: I answer that whatever men may please to call it, 'twill really be an advantage: For he that shall read a chapter by himself with due consideration, and consulting of good Paraphrasts, will have div'd so far into the sense of it, that he will much better comprehend it when he hears it read: as on the other side, the hearing it read so immediatly after will serve to confirm and rivet the sense in his mind. The one is as the conning, the other as the repeating the Lesson; which every Schole-boy can tell us is best don at the neares distance to each other. But I shall not contend for this, or any particular method: let the Scriptures be read in proportion to every mans leisure and capacity, and read with attention; and we need not be scrupulous about circumstances when the main duty is secur'd.

Distinction is to be made between temporary precepts, and perpetual.

34. But as in the doctrinal, so in the preceptive part, there is a caution to be us'd in our attention. For we are to distinguish between those temporary precepts that were adapted to particular times and occasions, and such as are of perpetual obligation. He that do's not this, may bring himself under the Jewish Law, or believe a necessity of selling all and giving it to the poor, becaus 'twas Christs command to the rich man, *Matt.* 19. or incur other considerable mischiefs.

And those which are of universal, and of particular concern.

35. Thus frequently commands are put in comprehensive indefinite words, but concern only the Generality to whom the Law is written; and not those who are entrusted with the vindication of their contemt. Accordingly 'tis said, *thou shalt not kill*, Mark 10. 19. which concerns the private person; but extends not to the Magistrate in the execution of his office, who *is a revenger* appointed by God, *and bears not the sword in vain*, Rom. 13. 4. So the injunction not *to swear at all*, Matt. 5. 34. refers to the common transactions of life; but not those solemn occasions where an oath is to give glory to God, *and is the end of all strife*, Heb. 6. 16. Yet these mistakes

miſtakes at this day prevail with Anabaptiſts and Quakers, and bottom their denial of the Magiſtrates power to protect his Subjects by war, and to determin differences in Peace, by the oath of witneſſes in judicial proceedings.

36. There is another diſtinction we are to attend to; and that is between abſolute and primary commands, and ſecundary ones: the former we are to ſet a ſpecial remark upon, as thoſe upon whoſe obſervance or violation our eternal life or death inſeparably depends. And therefore our firſt and moſt ſolicitous care muſt be concerning them. I mention this not to divert any from aſpiring to the higheſt degrees of perfection: but to reprove that prepoſterous courſe many take, who lay the greateſt weight upon thoſe things on which God laies the leaſt; and have more zeal for oblique intimations, then for expreſs downright commands; nay think by the one to commute for the contemt of the other. For example, faſting is recommended to us in Scripture, but in a far lower key then moral duties: rather as an expedient and help to vertue, then as properly a vertue it ſelf. And yet we may ſee men ſcrupulous in that, who ſtartle not at injuſtice and oppreſſion (that clamorous ſin that cries to heaven) who pretend to mortify their appetites by denying it its proper food or being luxurious in one ſort of it; and yet glut their avarice, eat up the poor, *and devour widows houſes*, Mat. 23. *Alſo between primary and ſecondary commands.*

37. To ſuch as theſe 'twould be good advice to fix their attention on the abſolute commands, to ſtudy moral honeſty and the eſſentials of Chriſtianity; to make a good progreſs there, and do what God indiſpenſably requires: and then it may be ſeaſonable to think of voluntary oblations: but till then they are ſo far from homage, that they are the moſt reprochful flattery; an attemt to bribe God againſt himſelf; and a ſacrilege, like that of *Dionyſius*, who took *Apollo*'s golden robe, and gave him a ſtuff one. *Moral honeſty is to be firſt attended to and ſecur'd*

38. The ſecond thing requiſit in our reading is application: this is the proper end of our attention: and without this we may be very buſy to very little purpoſe. The moſt laborious attention without it, puts us but in the condition of thoſe poor ſlaves that labor in the mines; who with infinit toil dig that ore of which they ſhall never partake. If therefore we will appropriate that rich treſure, we muſt apply, and ſo make it our own. *A ſecond requiſite in reading is application of all things to our ſelves.*

39. Let us then at every period of holy Writ, reflect and look on our ſelves as the perſons ſpoke to. When we find *Philip* giving baptiſm to the Eunuch upon this condition, that he *believe with all his heart*, Act. 8. let us conſider that unleſs we do ſo, our baptiſm (like a thing ſurreptitiouſly obtain'd) conveys no title to us, will avail us nothing. *Whither it be in narrations of hiſtory and fact.*

40. When we read our Saviours denunciation to the Jews, *except ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*; Luke 13. 5. we are to look on it as if addreſt immediatly to our ſelves; and conclude as great a neceſſity of our repentance. In thoſe black catalogues of crimes which the Apoſtle mentions, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. and *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 22. as excluding from the kingdom of heaven, we are to behold our own guilts arraign'd, and to reſolve that the ſame crimes will as certainly ſhut heaven gates againſt us, as thoſe to whom thoſe Epiſtles were immediatly directed. In all the precepts of good life and Chriſtian vertue, we are to think our ſelves as nearly and particularly concern'd, as if we had bin Chriſts Auditors on the Mount. So proportionably in all the threats and promiſes we are either to tremble or hope, according as we find our ſelves adhere to thoſe ſins or vertues to which they are affixt. *Or in denounciations.*

Which application can only render reading operative and effective.

41. This close application would render what we read operative and effective, which without it will be useless and insignificant. We may see an instance of it in *David*; who was not at all convinc'd of his own guilt by *Nathans* parable (tho the most apposite that was imaginable) till he roundly appli'd it, saying, *thou art the man*: 2 Sam. 12. And unless we treat our selves at the same rate, the Scripture may fill our heads with high notions, nay with many speculative truths, which yet amounts to no more then the Devils theology, *Jam.*2.19. and will as little advantage us.

Requisites after reading, first recollection.

42. It now remains that we speak of what we are to do after our reading; which may be summ'd up in two words: recollect and practice. Our memories are very frail as to things of this nature. And therefore we ought to impress them as deep as we can, by reflecting on what we have read. It is an observation out of the Levitical Law, that those beasts only were clean, and fit for sacrifice, *that chew'd the cud*, Lev. 11. 4. And tho the ceremony were Jewish, the moral is Christian, and admonishes us how we should revolve and ruminate on spiritual instructions. Without this what we hear or read slips insensibly from us, and like letters writ in chalk, is whipt out by the next succeeding thought: but recollection engraves and indents the characters in the mind. And he that would duly use it, would find other manner of impressions; more affective and more lasting then bare reading will leave.

Which we find necessary in the study of all sciences.

43. We find it thus in all Sciences: he that only reads over the rules, and laies aside the thoughts of them together with his Book, will make but a slow advance; whilest he that plods and studies upon them, repetes and reinforces them upon his mind, soon arrives to an eminency. By this it was that *David* attain'd to that perfection in Gods Law as to outstrip his teachers, *and understand more then the Ancients*, Psal. 119. 99, 100. because it was his *meditation* as he himself tell us, *verse* 97. 99.

And will have the same influence in divine.

44. Let us therefore pursue the same method; and when we have read a portion of Scripture, let us recollect what observable things we have there met with: what exhortations to vertue, or determents from vice; what promises to obedience, or menaces for the contrary: what examples of Gods vengeance against such or such sins, or what instances of his blessing upon duties. If we do this daily, we cannot but amass together a great stock of Scripture documents, which will be ready for us to produce upon every occasion. Satan can assault us no where, but we shall be provided of a guard, a *Scriptum est*; which we see was the sole armor the captain of our salvation us'd in this encounter with him, *Mat.* 4. *ver.* 4. 7. and 10. and will be as successful to us, if we will duly manage it.

Secondly practice i requir'd.

45. The last thing requir'd as consequent to our reading, is practice. This is the ultimate end, to which all the fore-going qualifications are directed. And if we fail here, the most assiduous diligence in all the former will be but lost labor. Let us mean never so well, attend never so close, recollect never so exactly; if after all we do not practice, all the rest will serve but to inhance our guilt. Christianity is an active Science, and the Bible was given us not merely for a theme of speculation, but for a rule of life.

'Twill not availe us that our opinions are right, if our manners be croo ed.

46. And alas, what will it avail us that our opinions are right, if our manners be crooked? When the Scripture has shew'd us what God requires of us, nay, has evinc'd to us the reasonableness of the injunctions, the great agreeableness which they have to the excellency of our nature:

and

and has backt this with the assurance that *in keeping of them there shall be a great reward*, Psal. 19. 11. if in the midst of such importunate invitations to life we will chuse death; we are indeed *worthy*, as the wise man speaks, *to take part with it*, Wisd. 1. 16. our crimes are hereby increas'd to a monstrous bulk, and also depriv'd of that veil and shelter which darkness and ignorance would have given them. And a vicious Christian may have cause at the last day to wish that he had studied the Alcoran rather then the Bible. His sensualities might then have pleaded, that they were but the anticipating his Paradise, taking up that before hand, which his Religion propos'd to him as his *summum bonum*, his final and highest aim. But with what confusion must a Christian then appear, whose institution obliges him to mortify the flesh: and yet has made it the business of his life, not only to satisfy, but even to enrage and enflame its appetites? that has set up a counter-discipline to that of the Gospel he professes; and when that requires austerities and self-denials, to reduce corrupt nature to a tameness and subjection, has not only pull'd off the bridle, but us'd the spur; contriv'd Arts to debauch even corruption it self; and has forc'd his reluctng nature upon studied and artificial lewdness? Such men may be thought to have read the Scripture with no other design then to be sure to run counter to it; that by informing themselves of Gods will, they may know the more exactly how to affront and contradict it.

47. Nay, so it is, too many unto malice add contemt; are not content only sullenly to resist its Precepts, but despise and revile them also, arraign the wisdom of God, and pronounce the divine Laws to be weak and impertinent; lay their Scenes of ridiculous mirth in the Bible; rally in the sacred Dialect, and play the Buffoons with the most serious thing in the world. An impious licentiousness which is now grown to that height, that it is one of the wonders of Gods long-suffering that there are not as many eminent instances of the vengeance as there are of the guilt. I have formerly complain'd of it, and must still crave leave to do so. It is indeed so spreading an infection, that we can never be sufficiently arm'd against it. Som degrees of it have tainted many who have not utterly renounc'd their reverence for the Bible: there being those who in their solemn moods own it as Gods word, and profess they must finally stand or fall by its verdict; who yet in their jocular humors make light and irreverent applications of its phrases and sentences, furnish out their little jests in its attire, and use it as if they thought it good for nothing else.

'Tis monstrous villany to read with malice and contemt.

48. And certainly this abuse in men that own the Bible, is infinitly more monstrous then in those who defy it: the latter look on it as a common thing, and use it as such: but for those who confess it sacred, thus to prostitute it, is a flat contradiction as much against the rules of Discourse as Religion: 'tis to offer the same abuse to Christ in his Word, which the rude souldiers did to his person; to bow the knee before it, and yet expose it as an object of scorn and laughter. But sure there cannot be two things more inconsistent, then the avowing it to be dictated by God in order to the most important concern of man, and yet debase it to the vilest purposes; make it the drudg and hackney to our sportful humors, and bring it out as the Philistins did *Samson*, only to make us merry, *Jud.* 16. 25.

Especially in them who confess it sacred.

49. Indeed one would wonder how that should become a proper instrument for that purpose, that those doctrins of righteousness, temperance

The terrors of the Lord are very improper subjects to raise mirth.

rance and judgment to come (every where scatter'd thro that Book) which set heathen *Felix* a trembling, should set Christians a laughing: and yet should men cite the same things and phrases out of another Author, there would be no jest in it. It seems therefore that the spirit and essence of this sort of wit lies in the profaness. How absurd is it then for men that do not utterly abjure Religion, to affect this impious sort of raillery, which has nothing but daring wickedness to recommend it? For certainly, of all the waies of discourse that ever pretended to wit, this has the least claim to it.

'Tis the meanest attemt at wit to repete misapply and fragments of books.

50. What strength of reason, or height of fancy is there in repeting of phrases and fragments of Books, when what they would say, they might much more properly express in their own words? In any other instance but this of the Bible, it would pass rather for a defect then an excess of wit. But that which I suppose renders it so taking, is, that it is the cheapest expedient for men to arrive to that reputation. Men that cannot go to the cost of any thing that is truly ingenious, can by this means immediatly commence wits; if they can but charge their memories with half a dozen Texts, they need no other furniture for the trade: these mangled and transposed, will be ready at all turns, and render them applauded by those who have no other mesure of wit, but its opposition to Piety. But would God, men would look a little before them; and consider what the final reckoning will be for such divertisements; and if the whole world be an unequal exchange for a soul, what a miserable Merchant is he that barters his for a bald insipid jest? such as a sober man would avoid were there no sin in it.

'Tis a vain excuse that what is done is in sport.

51. I know men are apt to flatter themselves, that these lighter frolicks will pass for nothing, so long as they do not seriously and maliciously oppose Gods word: but I fear they will find God in earnest, tho they be in jest. He that has *magnified his word above all things*, Psal. 138. 2. cannot brook that we should make it vile and cheap, play and dally with it. And if it were a capital crime to convert any of the perfume of the Sanctuary to common use, *Exod.* 30. 32. can we think God can be pleas'd to see his more sacred Word, the theme of our giddy mirth, and have his own words echoed to him in profane drollery?

This wanton liberty leads to contemt.

52. But besides 'tis to be consider'd that this wanton liberty is a step to the more solemn and deliberate contemt of Gods word: custom do's strangely prescribe to us, and he that a while has us'd any thing irreverently, will at last bring his practice into argument, and conclude that there is no reverence due to it. God knows we are naturally too apt to slight and easy apprehensions of sacred things; and had need to use all Arts and Instruments to impress an awe upon our minds.

'Tis wisdom not to despise small things, especially where God and our souls are concern'd

53. It will sure then be very unsafe for us to trifle with them, and by so undue a familiarity draw on that contemt which we should make it our care to avoid. The wise man saies, *he that contemns small things, shall fall by little and little*, Eccl. 19. 1. And tho no degree of irreverence towards God or his Word, can be call'd a small thing absolutely consider'd, yet comparatively with the more exorbitant degrees it may: and yet that smaller is the seed and parent of the greatest. It is so in all sins, the kingdom of Satan, like that of God, may be compar'd to a *grain of mustard seed*, Mat. 13. 31. which tho little in it self, is mighty in its increase.

No man is perfectly wicked at first.

54. No man ever yet began at the top of villany, but the advance is still gradual from one degree to another; each commission smoothing

and

and glibbing the way to the next. He that accuſtoms in ordinary diſcourſe, to uſe the ſacred name of God with as little ſentiment and reverence, as he do's that of his neighbor or ſervant; that makes it his common by-word, and cries Lord and God upon every the lighteſt occaſion of exclamation or wonder, this man has a very ſhort ſtep to the uſing it in oaths, and upon all frivolous occaſions; and he that ſwears vainly, is at no great diſtance from ſwearing falſely. It is the ſame in this inſtance of the Scriptures: He that indulges his wit to rally with them, will ſoon come to think them ſuch tame things that he may down-right ſcorn them: And when he is arriv'd to that, then he muſt pick quarrels to juſtify it, till at laſt he arrive even to the height of enmity.

The earlieſt caution is the beſt.

55. Let every man therefore take heed of ſetting ſo much as one ſtep in in this fatal circle; guard himſelf againſt the firſt inſinuation of this guilt: and when a jeſt offers it ſelf as a temtation, let him balance that with a ſober thought, and conſider whether the jeſt can quit the coſt of the profanation. Let him poſſeſs his mind with an habitual awe, take up the Bible with ſolemner thoughts, and other kind of apprehenſions then any human Author: and if he habituate himſelf to this reverence, every clauſe and phraſe of it that occurs to his mind, will be apter to excite him to devoute ejaculations then vain laughter.

An inſtance in the piety of K. Edw. the ſixth.

56. It is reported of our excellent Prince King *Edward* the ſixth; that when in his Council Chamber, a Paper that was call'd for, happen'd to lie out of reach, and the Perſon concern'd to produce it, took a Bible that lay by, and ſtanding upon it reacht down the Paper: the King obſerving what was don, ran himſelf to the place, and taking the Bible in his hands, kiſſed it, and laid it up again. Of this it were a very deſirable moral, that Princes, and all perſons in autority, would take care not to permit any to raiſe themſelves by either a hypocritical or profane trampling upon holy things. But beſides that, a more general application offers its ſelf; that all men of what condition ſoever, ſhould both themſelves abſtain from every action that has the appearance of a contemt of the holy Scripture; and alſo when they obſerve it in others, diſcountenance the inſolence: and by their words and actions give Teſtimony of the veneration which they have for that holy Book, they ſee others ſo wretchedly deſpiſe.

'Twill be of great importance to examin our progreſs.

57. But above all, let him who reads the Scripture, ſeriouſly ſet himſelf to the practice of it, and daily examin how he proceeds in it: he that diligently do's this, will not be much at leiſure to ſport with it: he will ſcarce meet with a Text which will not give him cauſe of reflection, and provide him work within his own breſt: every duty injoin'd will promt him to examin how he has perform'd; every ſin forbid, will call him to recollect how guilty he has bin; every pathetic ſtrain of devotion will kindle his zeal, or at leaſt upbraid his coldneſs: every heroic example will excite his emulation. In a word, every part of Scripture will, if duly appli'd, contribute to ſom good and excellent end. And when a thing is proper for ſuch noble purpoſes, can it be the part of a wiſe man to apply it only to mean and trivial? Would any but an Idiot waſt that Soveraign Liquor in the waſhing of his feet, which was given him to expel poiſon from his heart? And are not we guilty of the like folly when we apply Gods word to ſerve only a ludicrous humor: and make our ſelves merry with that which was deſign'd for the moſt ſerious and moſt important purpoſe, the ſalvation of our ſouls. And indeed who ever takes any lower aim then that and the vertues preparatory to it in his ſtudy of Scripture, extremely debaſes it.

The promises of Scripture are not to be attaind but by the observation of its precepts:

58. Let us therefore keep a steady eie upon that mark, and press towards it as the Apostle did; *Phil.* 3. 14. *walk by that rule* the holy Scripture propoſes; faithfully and diligently obſerve its precepts, that we may finally partake its promiſes. To this end continually pray we, in the words of our holy mother the Church, unto Almighty God, who has caus'd all holy Scripture to be written for our learning; that we may in ſuch wiſe hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by patience and comfort of his holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of everlaſting Life, which he has given us in our Savior Jeſus Chriſt.

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THe Reader is to be advertis'd that the Errata are here multiplied to ſo large a number, becauſe every literal miſpelling, as far as it could be obſerv'd, is taken notice of; which is don not only becauſe they are ſometimes ſo unhappy to diſturb the ſenſe as much as greater deviations: but that in caſe of future editions, theſe miſadventures which thro many former impreſſions have bin collected, may be thereby prevented; and this edition may not only remain a ſtandard of the Tracts really writen by the Author, but alſo of the original and genuine Text.

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